

A photograph of two women in professional attire shaking hands. The woman on the left is smiling and looking towards the right. The woman on the right is partially visible, looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with hills and water. A teal vertical bar is on the right side of the image.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT



"Always bear in mind that your own resolution to success is more important than any other one thing." **Abraham Lincoln**

Hello NCCC Members,

As mentioned in the pre-arrival Welcome Packet and during CTI, all Corps Members, Team Leaders and STLs are asked to submit a resume (a concise, organized summary of your skills, accomplishments, experiences, and education). Make sure yours includes a description of your AmeriCorps NCCC experience!

This requirement is a way of supporting you in preparing for Life After AmeriCorps. Resume writing and reviewing is, in itself, a key skill to have. We also feel it's important for all within the Corps, regardless of future plans, to have a prepared resume with which you can capture the wonderful experiences you have had coming into NCCC and are gaining through this program. While your next opportunity may not require a resume, it almost certainly will require the same content in some form (a job application, interview, etc.) As an added bonus, we'll add your resume to your member file. That way, if you should misplace it, you can always contact us for another copy.

There is likely a spectrum of experience with resumes within the Corps: some of you perhaps have never created/used one; others are resume-writing experts with several polished versions at the ready. Regardless of where you're at, we'd like to support you in this process. To get you started, this edition of the Life after AmeriCorps packet is dedicated to Resume Building, including tips, best practices, a list of action words, and sample TL & CM resumes for your reference.

There'll also be opportunities at transitions where several STLs and staff members will be available for resume assistance. Additionally, a number of staff here are willing and able to assist with this on a 1:1 basis – please feel free to check in with someone if you'd like their/our feedback.

Thanks for all your hard work,

Erin Blobaum
Assistant Program Director/Training

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Translating Your NCCC Experience Into a Career



Some people leave flourishing careers to volunteer and are ready to step right back into them. Others take time off partly to reassess their professional path. Still others are looking to start university or graduate studies while some are fresh out of school and just beginning to build their paid employment résumé. Wherever you are on this spectrum, you'll need to do some self-assessment to figure out where to go next.

Start by making a rough list of everything you learned during your time as a volunteer. Include skills that you've both acquired and broadened. First, focus on skills of a physical or craft nature. For example, did you already know how to do basic construction but learned a few new tricks while volunteering? Or maybe you were introduced to organic farming methods for the first time? Perhaps you strengthened your communication skills or improved your public speaking abilities?

Be specific about the different skills you were able to take away from your experience.

Second, brainstorm those skills that are more social, interpersonal, or organizational in nature. For example, if you taught in a classroom, you likely not only learned or expanded your classroom management and teaching styles but also honed your cultural competency, conflict resolution, public speaking, and presentation skills. Similarly, if you spent your time as a volunteer building houses, what did you learn from participating on—or possibly even managing—a team?

Be specific and detailed about what you've learned. This may be an ongoing list that you work on over a few days as you continue to review your trip and identify the different skills you were able to take away from the entire experience.

Next, brainstorm how you might be able to apply these different skills to specific careers you might be interested in exploring. The key concept here is the transferability of your new skills. How might your strengthened cultural competency be an asset to a social services agency? How might these same skills be applied at a multinational corporation? Would you be interested in working with people from the area you volunteered in? Spend some time thinking about your career goals and translate how the skills that you learned and broadened during your volunteer experience can also serve you in future endeavors. Don't forget to also chat with those you've met during your volunteer experience, especially staff members of volunteer-sending organizations and fellow volunteers, as these folks may have additional suggestions and advice on how to best apply your skills.

What Is a Resume?

THE NUMBER ONE PURPOSE OF A RESUME

The resume is a tool with one specific purpose: to win an interview. If it grabs the readers attention, it works. If it doesn't, it isn't an effective resume. A resume is an advertisement, nothing more, nothing less.

A great resume doesn't just tell them what you have done but makes the same assertion that all good ads do: If you buy this product, you will get these specific, direct benefits. It presents you in the best light. It convinces the employer that you have what it takes to be successful in this new position or career.

It is so pleasing to the eye that the reader is enticed to pick it up and read it. It "whets the appetite," stimulates interest in meeting you and learning more about you. It inspires the prospective employer to pick up the phone and ask you to come in for an interview.



OTHER PURPOSES OF A RESUME

- To pass the employer's screening process (requisite educational level, number years' experience, etc.), to give basic facts which might favorably influence the employer (companies worked for, political affiliations, racial minority, etc.). To provide contact information: an up-to-date address and a telephone number (a telephone number which will always be answered during business hours).
- To establish yourself as a professional person with high standards and excellent writing skills, based on the fact that the resume is so well done (clear, well-organized, well-written, well-designed, of the highest professional grades of printing and paper). For persons in the art, advertising, marketing, or writing professions, the resume can serve as a sample of their skills.
- To have something to give to potential employers, your job-hunting contacts and professional references, to provide background information, to give out in "informational interviews" with the request for a critique (a concrete creative way to cultivate the support of this new person), to send a contact as an excuse for follow-up contact, and to keep in your briefcase to give to people you meet casually - as another form of "business card."
- To use as a covering piece or addendum to another form of job application, as part of a grant or contract proposal, as an accompaniment to graduate school or other application.
- To put in an employer's personnel files.
- To help you clarify your direction, qualifications, and strengths, boost your confidence, or to start the process of committing to a job or career change.

WHAT IT ISN'T

It is a mistake to think of your resume as a history of your past, as a personal statement or as some sort of self expression. Sure, most of the content of any resume is focused on your job history. But write from the intention to create interest, to persuade the employer to call you. If you write with that goal, your final product will be very different than if you write to inform or catalog your job history.

Most people write a resume because everyone knows that you have to have one to get a job. They write their resume grudgingly, to fulfill this obligation. Writing the resume is only slightly above filling out income tax forms in the hierarchy of worldly delights. If you realize that a great resume can be your ticket to getting exactly the job you want, you may be able to muster some genuine enthusiasm for creating a real masterpiece, rather than the feeble products most people turn out.

How to Write Masterpiece Resume

The resume is visually enticing, a work of art. Simple clean structure. Very easy to read. Symmetrical. Balanced. Uncrowded. As much white space between sections of writing as possible; sections of writing that are no longer than six lines, and shorter if possible.

There is uniformity and consistency in the use of italics, capital letters, bullets, boldface, and underlining. Absolute parallelism in design decisions. For example, if a period is at the end of one job's dates, a period should be at the end of all jobs' dates; if one degree is in boldface, all degrees should be in boldface.

As mentioned above, the resume's first impression is most important. It should be exceptionally visually appealing, to be inviting to the reader. Remember to think of the resume as an advertisement.

There are absolutely no errors. No typographical errors. No spelling errors. No grammar, syntax, or punctuation errors. No errors of fact.

All the basic, expected information is included. A resume must have the following key information: your name, address, phone number, and your email address at the top of the first page, a listing of jobs held, in reverse chronological order, educational degrees including the highest degree received, in reverse chronological order. Additional, targeted information will of course accompany this. Much of the information people commonly put on a resume can be omitted, but these basics are mandatory.

Jobs listed include a title, the name of the firm, the city and state of the firm, and the years. Jobs earlier in a career can be summarized, or omitted if prior to the highest degree, and extra part-time jobs can be omitted. If no educational degrees have been completed, it is still expected to include some mention of education (professional study or training, partial study toward a degree, etc.) acquired after high school.

It is targeted. A resume should be targeted to your goal, to the ideal next step in your career. First you should get clear what your job goal is, what the ideal position or positions would be. Then you should figure out what key skills, areas of expertise or body of experience the employer will be looking for in the candidate. Gear the resume structure and content around this target, proving these key qualifications. If you have no clear goal, take the skills (or knowledge) you most enjoy or would like to use or develop in your next career step and build the resume around those.

Strengths are highlighted/weaknesses de-emphasized. Focus on whatever is strongest and most impressive. Make careful and strategic choices as to how to organize, order, and convey your skills and background. Consider whether to include the information at all, placement in overall structure of the resume, location on the page itself or within a section, ordering of information, more impressive ways of phrasing the information, use of design elements (such as boldface to highlight, italics to minimize, ample surrounding space to draw the eye to certain things).

It has focus. A resume needs an initial focus to help the reader understand immediately. Don't make the reader go through the whole resume to figure out what your profession is and what you can do. Think of the resume as an essay with a title and a summative opening sentence. An initial focus may be as simple as the name of your profession ("Commercial Real Estate Agent," "Resume Writer") centered under the name and address; it may be in the form of an Objective; it may be in the form of a Summary Statement or, better, a Summary Statement beginning with a phrase identifying your profession.

Use power words. For every skill, accomplishment, or job described, use the most active impressive verb you can think of (which is also accurate). Begin the sentence with this verb, except when you must vary the sentence structure to avoid repetitious writing.



Sample Corps Member Resume

COOPER RIVER

123 DON JULIO AVE · SACRAMENTO, CA 95652
(916)566-3345 · NONONSENSE@HOTMAIL.COM

EXPERIENCE

Corps Member September 2002 - July 2003

AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps, Sacramento, CA

- Served communities across the Pacific United States focusing on education, unmet human needs, environment, public safety and disaster relief
- Tutored and mentored third graders and twelve EMD students
- Promoted social awareness and community involvement among ten member team
- Facilitated reflection and service learning activities
- Contacted prospective sponsors and organizations for future AmeriCorps projects
- Served 30,000 meals on Thanksgiving Day with Hosea Feed the Homeless in Los Angeles, CA
- Distributed bulk items to tornado victims through the American Red Cross

Resident Assistant August 2000 - May 2001

Colorado Mountain College, Steamboat Springs, CO

- Managed floor of 30 residents
- Performed first step counseling and mediation to residents
- Created and oversaw various educational and recreational programs
- Monitored front desk, answered phones and distributed mail

Summer Conference Assistant Summer 2000

Colorado Mountain College, Steamboat Springs, CO

- Assigned rooms and assisted conference participants
- Performed maintenance duties and cleaned rooms

EDUCATION

Parkland College, Champaign, IL December 2003

Associate of Arts in General Studies

SKILLS AND CERTIFICATIONS

- American Red Cross CPR, First Aid and Disaster Services
- South Carolina Substitute Teacher trained
- Excellent phone and communication skills
- Basic knowledge of Microsoft Word and the Internet
- Extensive travel in the US and abroad

Sample Team Leader Resume

Anna Knapp
2231 South Hobson Avenue, Charleston, South Carolina 29405
phone: (843) 221-5544
e-mail: annaknapp@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE

To obtain an upper elementary position in a parochial school utilizing my communication skills.

EDUCATION

Elementary Education Teaching License

September 2003

- State of Indiana, License #758368
- General Elementary 1-6, Non-Dept 7/8
- Language Arts Endorsement 1-9
- Social Studies Endorsement 1-9
- Reading Minor 1-9

Bachelor of Science, Elementary Education

May 2003

Saint Joseph's College, Rensselaer, IN

EXPERIENCE

Corps Member

September 2003 – July 2004

AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps, Charleston, SC

- Worked on a diverse team serving communities across the southeast in the areas of unmet human needs, education, environment, and public safety
- Tutored alternative high school students to help improve standardized test scores
- Completed weekly project report for 11 member team as Assistant Team Leader
- Constructed and maintained 12 trails at a state park

Student Teacher

January – April 2003

- Kankakee Valley Intermediate School, 4th Grade, Wheatfield, IN
- Taught a total of 23 students over a 14 week period
- Developed, organized, and implemented lesson plans in mathematics, social studies, guided reading and science
- Implemented behavioral management in the classroom
- Maintained entire class load for five weeks
- Created tests in several subject areas
- Designed grading rubrics

Director of Summer Adventure Series

Summer 2002

- Allen County 4-H Clubs, Incorporated, Fort Wayne, IN
- Held program where K- 6th graders could be safe and have fun
- Trained new staff
- Ensured that lessons and materials were ready for coming week
- Managed on-site problems
- Created and maintained database of over 300 participants

Pre-service Teaching

September 2000 – April

2002 Kankakee Valley Intermediate School, ISTEP Remediation Class; Wheatfield, IN
Rensselaer Central Middle School, 8th grade Language Arts; Rensselaer, IN
Meadowlawn Elementary School, 3rd grade; Monticello, IN
St. Augustine Catholic School, 5th grade; Rensselaer, IN

- Observed different teaching styles and tutored students
- Created interactive bulletin boards, planned and taught several lessons

ACTIVITIES

- American Red Cross CPR, First Aid and Disaster Relief certified
- Proficient in Microsoft Word and Excel
- Campus Ministry
- Kairos Retreat Leader
- 4 years college band -marching/concert



AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps Pacific Region Peer Review Form for a Resume

(Have one of your teammates use this form to review your resume once you've completed it)

Name on Resume: _____

1. Content

- Contact Information Comments:
- Name
 - Address
 - Telephone
 - E-mail address

- Education Comments:
- School Name
 - Address/Location
 - Degree Conferred/ Classes toward

- Work Experience Comments:
- Name of Organization
 - Title/Position
 - Location
 - Dates
 - Experience

- Other Information Comments:
- Objective
 - Volunteer Experience
 - Awards/Honors
 - Extracurricular Activities
 - Skills

2. Resume Check-up

- Content (Spelling, Action Words, Grammar, Awkward Phrases, and Use of Acronyms)
Comments:

- Design & Layout (Font Size, 1-Sided Print, Number of Pages, Format Consistency, and Use of Space)
Comments:

3. Overall/ General Comments:

Reviewed by: _____ Date: _____

Cover Letter Tips & Guidelines

The purpose of the cover letter is to:

- Make a good case for the match between you and the position for which you are applying.
- Show how you are unique in your ability to add value to the organization.
- Focus on your qualifications for the position.
- Provide an example of your writing abilities.
- Convey interest in the position and an eagerness to be considered.

Your cover letter will determine the employer's first impression of you.

Cover letters should be tailored specifically for the position to which you are applying. At some organizations they are indicated as being "Optional," take it upon yourself to make it mandatory.

Bear in mind that the letters you write not only convey your interest and qualifications, but also give the employer an opportunity to observe your attentiveness to detail, spelling, grammar and the overall quality of your written communication.

The quality of your cover letter will determine the employer's first impression of you. The following are general guidelines to help you design your cover letter.

- Use a business letter format.
- Keep the letter limited to one page, using paper identical to the paper used for your resume.
- If possible, address the letter to an individual by name, including correct title, organization and address. You can also address the letter to a "Selection Committee" or a "Search Committee."
- Highlight your skills and abilities that are relevant to the type of position you are seeking; Go beyond being a mere restatement of what's already on your resume.
- Tailor the letter to the specific position and organization.
- Focus on the needs of the employer and how you can fulfill them
- Be positive in context, tone, word choice and expectations.
- Include a closing statement that expresses your positive intentions on being interviewed, hearing from that individual and/or taking the next step. This statement brings closure to the letter.
- Carefully spell-check and proofread.



Sample Cover Letter Template

(Hard copy: sender address and contact info at top. Your address and the date can be left-justified, or centered.)

Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code
Telephone Number
E-mail Address

Month, Day, Year

Mr./Ms./Dr. FirstName LastName
Title
Name of Organization
Street or P. O. Box Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. LastName:

Opening paragraph: State why you are writing; how you learned of the organization or position, and basic information about yourself.

2nd paragraph: Tell why you are interested in the employer or type of work the employer does (Simply stating that you are interested does not tell why, and can sound like a form letter). Demonstrate that you know enough about the employer or position to relate your background to the employer or position. Mention specific qualifications which make you a good fit for the employer's needs. (Focus on what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.) This is an opportunity to explain in more detail relevant items in your resume. Refer to the fact that your resume is enclosed. Mention other enclosures if such are required to apply for a position.

3rd paragraph: Indicate that you would like the opportunity to interview for a position or to talk with the employer to learn more about their opportunities or hiring plans. State what you will do to follow up, such as telephone the employer within two weeks. If you will be in the employer's location and could offer to schedule a visit, indicate when. State that you would be glad to provide the employer with any additional information needed. Thank the employer for her/his consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature [on hard copy])

Your name typed

(In case of e-mail, your full contact info appears below your printed name [instead of at the top, as for hard copy], and of course there is no handwritten signature)

Enclosure(s) (refers to resume, etc.)

(Note: the contents of your letter might best be arranged into four paragraphs. Consider what you need to say and use good writing style.)

PURPOSE OF AN INTERVIEW

A common misconception about interviewing is that it is a one-sided process... that the primary purpose of an interview is for an employer to evaluate a candidate to determine whether or not they want to hire that candidate. On the contrary, an interview should be a two-way process. **For both parties involved in an interview, the primary concern for each should be to determine if they are willing to invest in the other based on the return they can expect on their investment.**

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- **Identify the "return" you expect on your "investment"** - In other words, "What is it that you want to get out of your position?" It is essential for you to know what your *goals, preferences and values* are when it comes to work. For example, how would you rank the importance of these factors: salary and benefits, receiving recognition for your work, the freedom to be creative in your work, variety in the job, the ability to contribute positively to society, having privacy, receiving ongoing training / education, or the opportunity for advancement? These are just a few examples of the many critical factors that can impact an employee's personal satisfaction level with his/her employment.

- **Employer research** - Just as a company uses your resume as an initial screening tool and a way to prepare for interviewing you by identifying your skills and experiences, so, too, may you use an organization's printed literature to prepare yourself for the interview. In addition, the internet is an invaluable tool for learning about a company's products, services, benefits, philosophy, training, facilities, operating budget, profit margin, "claims to fame" and more! It is also important to research the company culture and the history of the position you are interviewing by talking to networking contacts already inside the organization. The Career Center offers a *Networking* handout to assist students in this important step.

- **Prepare for questions in advance** - Identify *experiences, skills and characteristics* unique to you. Formulate answers to commonly asked interview questions. Know how to identify and respond to the hidden agenda of trick questions. Compile a list of questions you will ask.

- **Compile relevant information to take with you** - Some organizations might ask you to fill out an application in addition to providing your resume, which may require information such as past addresses, phone numbers, salary history, supervisors, etc. You should also take extra copies of your resume, your transcript, and notepad or leather folder for taking notes along with a nice pen, and if appropriate, samples of your work (your portfolio).

- **Practice, practice, practice!** - Just as a performer must rehearse many times prior to a successful performance, it is essential to rehearse prior to a successful interview. Your mock interview can even be videotaped for you to keep if you wish. It is also a good idea to rehearse with friends who know you well or in front of a mirror.



It is essential to rehearse prior to a successful interview



TYPICAL STAGES OF AN INTERVIEW

All interviews fit a general pattern. While each will differ somewhat, most will share three common characteristics: the warm-up, the information exchange, and the wrap-up. The typical interview will last approximately 30 minutes to an hour although some may be longer.

The Warm up

1) First impressions - The interviewer starts to evaluate you before you even open your mouth. It is a good idea to arrive early to show your respect for the

interviewer's time and your attention to punctuality. You will also be expected to shake hands upon introduction. Don't be afraid to extend your hand first as this shows assertiveness. Also, don't underestimate the power of physical appearance and non-verbal behavior. Dress professionally, sit and walk with good posture and don't fidget. Finally, be sure to smile and relax!

2) Building rapport - Many interviewers begin the interview with small talk on such topics as the weather, sports, common acquaintances or how your travel was to the interview. This component rarely has anything to do with your job-specific skills, but is designed to help the interviewer evaluate how well you communicate on an informal basis. You must do more than smile or nod to score points in this area. Participate actively in such discussion. You may even wish to brush up on current events by reading the newspaper or watching the news in the days preceding your interview.

The Information Exchange

3) The overview - The interview "officially" begins when the interviewer either offers an overview of the company and/or position, or asks you to provide an overview of yourself and your background. If he or she opens with an overview of the position and/or company, it may be vague. Do not hesitate to ask for details at some point during the interview if you need more information. If the interviewer opens by saying, "Tell us/me a little about yourself," be prepared to provide an opening statement of no more than a minute or two in length. You should briefly describe who you are and highlight your professional or academic background. You may also offer personal information about yourself and indicate where your current career interests lie.

4) The interviewer has the floor - At this stage in the interview the focus turns toward the interviewer asking specific questions about your background, experiences, skills, goals, etc. It will be important for you to demonstrate how your experience and abilities match the position and the challenges it poses. It is critical that you state accomplishments from your past which support your candidacy.

5) Your turn to ask questions - When the interviewer asks if you have any questions, this is your cue that the interview is coming to a close. By asking intelligent, well-thought-out questions, you show the employer that you have researched the company and are serious about the organization. The questions you ask should be designed to bring out your interest in and knowledge of the organization. This is also an appropriate place for you to ask the interviewer what the expected time frame is for filling the position and when you might expect to receive feedback on your interview.

The Wrap-up

6) Summarize - Often the employer will ask, "Is there anything else you would like us/me to know?" This is your chance to offer a brief bulleted summary of your skills, reiterate your interest in the position and highlight anything you were not able to elaborate on during the information exchange portion of the interview. As with the overview, keep your comments to a minute or two in length.

7) Final Impressions - The interview is not over until you walk out the door. Try to remain friendly, enthusiastic, and courteous. Shake hands firmly with the interviewer and thank him or her for considering you. Let the interviewer know that you look forward to hearing from him or her soon.

Networking Tips: How to Work a Room



Most of us are not born minglers. Practice and preparation will help you develop the skills it takes to be effective at an Employer Info Session, a Career Fair, or other serendipitous opportunities. As difficult or awkward as it may feel at first, the ability to meet and make a positive, professional impression on people will become ever more important as your career advances and develops. Here are some tips to get you started.

Check your attitude

Many of us are shy or reluctant to approach strangers in new social situations, so understandably it's not always easy to muster the energy to try and connect with people at networking events. That's why it's key to get mentally geared up before you even show up. Because your attitude often guides your behavior, you must overcome any negative self-talk that could hinder you from reaching out to others. Do these outlooks sound familiar?

- "Why should I bother trying to impress this person? I'm only one of a hundred students this recruiter is going to see today."
- "I don't think I know enough to engage the company reps in an intelligent conversation."
- "I've never really been good at meeting people. That's just my personality."

Such negative thoughts prevent you from pushing past any social roadblocks standing in your way. The truth is that many, if not most, people have similar thoughts in group situations and are just as hesitant to initiate conversations. But if you change your attitude from negative to positive, you can instead take the lead. Remember:

- People enjoy talking about themselves. Ask them questions to get them started.
- People feel flattered when you show an interest in them and their work/organization. And they will reciprocate your demonstrations of sincere interest.
- You have more to offer others than you might think; just believe it.

Redefine what it means to interact with "strangers"

When you join a new student organization or club, you share certain interests with the members. When you go to a party, you run into people you've seen in class or around your dorm. A networking event is not really all that different if you view it as an occasion to find what you have in common with other people there. Commonalities help "strangers" connect more easily.

- Take the initiative to approach others, introduce yourself, and share a piece of information that could reveal the common thread you share with them.
- During conversations, listen carefully to discover shared interests or goals.
- Use your shared background or interests as the basis for sustaining conversations.



Prepare and practice your self-introduction

To avoid being tongue-tied when you try to start a conversation with someone you don't know, prepare a self-introduction that is clear, interesting, and well delivered. What you say about yourself will depend on the nature of the event, but in any case, it shouldn't take longer than 8-10 seconds. Although practicing your introduction might at first seem silly and artificial, it will eventually help you make an introduction that sounds natural, confident, and smooth. Here are a few examples:

- "Hi, my name is Catherine Lee. I'm glad to have this chance to meet you and learn how a psychology major can break into the pharmaceutical industry." [Employer Information Session]
- "Good morning, I'm Bryan Sampson, a former summer intern at your Los Angeles branch." [Career Fair]
- "Hello, my name is Jessica Garcia. I'm a junior rhetoric major looking to find out what it's like working in public relations and marketing." [Career Speed Dating Event]

Risk rejection - it's not the end of the world

It happens. Some individuals may not respond to your introduction in the way you would like. If that takes place, don't take it personally and just move on. As long as you maintain an outgoing and friendly attitude, you can plan for continued networking success by:

- Identifying the goals you want to achieve at the networking event before you go (e.g., to learn more about a career, to develop internship leads, etc.)
- Keeping a healthy sense of humor.
- Treating everyone as you would want to be treated. Aside from being the courteous thing to do, you don't know who might be helpful to you in the future.

And last, but not least, don't forget how important it is for you to physically move around and about when you're at a networking event. You can't work a room when you're sitting down! So get in there

Mixing Online Social Networking with Work



Social networking isn't really news, but its use in the workplace is.

According to a survey of human resources professionals by Challenger, Gray & Christmas, an outplacement consulting organization, 59 percent of companies don't have a formal policy in place regarding the use of social networking sites, such as MySpace and Facebook, at the office, perhaps because nearly half of those polled said surfing these sites isn't a problem as long as employees are completing their work.

While perception is generally positive, one-third of those surveyed indicated that social networking sites are a "major drain on worker output." Nearly one-quarter of companies reported blocking access to the sites entirely, according to Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

How can social networkers handle this technology at the office? Read on for five tips from career experts.

1. Use It

"I think it's a huge tool," says author Nicholas Aretakis. "I try to convey to recent graduates that employers actually want people who have the ability to market and sell through these massive networking sites. Whether it's used to launch an album, promote a book or sell another product, it's valuable to have these large distribution lists, to get invited to join groups, to find out what's hot and what's not."

Career strategist Daisy Swan concurs. "In terms of networking and finding out about career paths and to get a sense of different kinds of people and professional opportunities, I think it's fantastic," she says. "I'm all for the social networking sites because I believe there's so much you can learn. And if you want to be accessible to headhunters, it's great."

2. But Don't Abuse It

Social networking is a good thing -- but too much of any good thing can sometimes be bad. Experts caution workers to exercise restraint when accessing these sites at the office. "As an employer, I'd be incredibly disappointed if an employee were keeping a running tab on his whereabouts throughout the workday on any site," Swan says. "My perspective on that is that it's like taking personal calls all day."

Swan adds that if you're in marketing or business strategy and social networking is part of your job, then you can justify your social media use. If not, keep it to a minimum.

3. Once You're a Professional, Keep It Professional

A lot of MySpace and Facebook users first created their profiles when they were students. And many of those students are now prospective employees. Edit out casual or crass content from your profile so you come across as a professional. "Always be aware that any social networking profile you're putting out there should be employer-worthy," Swan says. "Make certain you have a respectable page because these are used as references for anybody to look at."

4. Be Aware of the Company You Keep

Fair or not, we're often judged by the people with whom we associate. Use caution when "friending" folks. Don't do so indiscriminately or you may wind up just a few clicks away from shady characters that can undermine your professional reputation.

5. Watch What You Say

Because no privacy option seems unhackable these days, err on the side of caution when posting anything to your personal profiles. "You need to know what you're putting out there in terms of your messaging," Swan says. "Anything you wouldn't want everyone to hear you say? Don't put it on there."

Aretakis adds, "Don't put anything in writing that you wouldn't want the people in HR read. Even something said in jest could get you fired."

Action Verbs for Resumes and Cover Letters

Below is a sample of potential action verbs you can use in your cover letter or resume that will help describe your accomplishments, skills, and experiences gained from your work history. Use these action verbs in your resume and cover letters to increase the strength of your writing and make employers take notice of your accomplishments, skills, activities and experiences!

- **Accomplished**, accounted, achieved, acknowledged, acquired, acted, addressed, adapted, adjusted, administered, advanced to, advertised, advised, advocated, aided, aligned, allocated, analyzed, answered, anticipated, applied, appointed, argued, arranged, articulated, ascertained, assembled, assessed, assigned, assisted, assured, attained, attended, audited, authored
- **Balanced**, began, bolstered, boosted, bought, briefed, brought, budgeted, built
- **Calculated**, carried out, catalogued, categorized, caused, centralized, chaired, challenged, changed, charted, checked, chose, clarified, classified, coached, co-authored, co-founded, coded, collaborated, combined, commanded, compared, competed, completed, computed, conceived, conceptualized, conciliated, condensed, conducted, conferred, confronted, connected, conserved, constructed, consulted, contacted, continued, contacted, contracted, contributed, controlled, conversed, converted, conveyed, convinced, cooperated, coordinated, corrected, corresponded, counseled, counted, crafted, created, critiqued, cultivated, customized, cut
- **Dealt (with)**, debated, decreased, deduced, deferred, defined, delegated, delivered, demonstrated, derived, designed, described, designated, detected, determined, developed, devised, dialogued, diagnosed, diagrammed, diminished, directed, discovered, discussed, dispatched, dispensed, displayed, disposed, disseminated, distinguished, distributed, diverted, documented, drafted, dramatized, drew, drilled, drove, duplicated
- **Enlarged**, earned, edited, educated, effected, elected, elevated, elicited, eliminated, employed, empowered, enabled, enacted, encouraged, enforced, engaged, enlisted, ensured, entertained, equipped, entertained, established, estimated, evaluated, examined, exceeded, excelled, executed, exercised, exhibited, expanded, expedited, experimented, explained, explored, expressed, extracted
- **Facilitated**, familiarized, fashioned, filed, filtered, financed, fixed, followed (up), forecasted, foresaw, formed, formulated, forwarded, fostered, found, founded, functioned (as)
- **Gained**, gathered, gave, generated, governed, graded, grafted, greeted, grouped, grossed, guarded, guided
- **Handled**, harmonized, headed, heightened, held, helped, highlighted, hiked, housed
- **Identified**, illustrated, imagined, immersed, implemented, imposed, improved, improvised, included, incorporated, increased, indicated, indoctrinated, inferred, influenced, initiated, innovated, inquired, inspected, installed, instigated, installed, instilled, instituted, instructed, instrumental (in), insured, integrated, interacted, interpreted, intervened, introduced, invented, invested, investigated, involved, isolated, issued, itemized
- **Joined**, judged, juggled, juried, justified

- Kept, keyed

- **L**abored, launched, learned, lectured, led, leveled, lifted, listened, lobbied, located, logged, lowered

- **M**ade, maintained, managed, manipulated, mapped, marketed, mastered, measured, mediated, mentored, met, minimized, mixed, mobilized, moderated, modified, monitored, motivated, moved, multiplied



- **N**amed, navigated, negotiated, netted, neutralized, noted, notified, numbered

- **O**bserved, obtained, offered, opened, operated, orchestrated, ordered, organized, oriented, outlined, overcame, overhauled, oversaw

- **P**ainted, paraphrased, participated, performed, persuaded, photographed, piloted, pin-pointed, pioneered, placed, planned, played, polished, possessed, practiced, predicted, prepared, prescribed, presented, presided, prevailed, prevented, prioritized, probed, proceeded, processed, procured, produced, programmed, projected, promoted, proofed, proofread, proposed, protected, proved, provided, publicized, published, purchased

- **R**aised, ran, rated, read, realized, rearranged, reasoned, reassembled, received, recognized, recommended, reconciled, reconditioned, reconciled, reconstructed, recorded, recruited, reduced, referred, regrouped, regulated, rehabilitated, reinforced, related, relayed, remodeled, removed, renovated, reordered, reorganized, replaced, replenished, reported, represented, reproduced, requested, rescued, researched, reshaped, resolved, responded, restored, resulted in, retrieved, revamped, revealed, reviewed, revised, revitalized, revived, reworked, rewrote, rotated, routed

- **S**afeguarded, salvaged, saved, saw, scheduled, scouted, screened, searched, secured, selected, sent, served, serviced, set, set up, shaped, shared, sharpened, shipped, shortened, showed, sifted, signaled, signified, simplified, sketched, skilled, smoothed, sold, solicited, solved, sorted, sought, spearheaded, specified, spoke, staffed, staged, standardized, started, stated, stimulated, stored, stowed, straightened, strengthened, structured, studied, submitted, succeeded, suggested, summarized, supervised, supplied, surmounted, supported, surveyed, switched, synchronized, systematized

- **T**abulated, tackled, talked, tallied, targeted, taught, tended, tested, tightened, timed, took over, totaled, toured, traced, tracked, traded, trained, transcribed, transferred, transformed, translated, transmitted, transported, traveled, treated, trimmed, troubleshoot, turned, tutored, typed

- **U**ncovered, undertook, unified, united, updated, upgraded, used, utilized

- **V**alidated, verbalized, verified, visualized, volunteered

- **W**ashed, weathered, weatherized, weighed, won, worked, wrote

Links to Success

RESUMES

10 Tips to Bullet Proof Your Resume

<http://www.free-resume-tips.com/10tips.html>

10 tips to help write resumes, focuses on attention-grabbing key words.

15 Tips for Writing Winning Resumes

<http://www.questcareer.com/tips.htm>

15 tips to help you write a resume to effectively market yourself to employers.

How to Write a Masterpiece of a Resume

<http://www.rockportinstitute.com/resumes>

Award-winning guide to resume writing that offers examples, format choices, help writing the objective, the summary and other sections. It is the most trusted resume-writing guide on the planet, used by more than a million people each year.

How to Write a Resume Objective

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/how-to-write-a-resume-objective.html>

Need help writing an objective statement? This short article offers 3 tips to grab your reader's attention and get your message across.

Sample Resumes

http://www.quintcareers.com/resume_samples.html

More than 90 sample resumes organized by profession.

COVER LETTERS

5 Key Cover Letter Tips That Open Doors

<http://www.careerealism.com/cover-letter-opens-doors/>

5 strategies that can help even a novice letter writer create a memorable introduction to capture an employer's attention.

How to Write a Cover Letter

<http://www.landingonyourfeet.com/job-seeker-tools/cover-letter-resources-and-tools/cover-letter-basics/how-to-write-a-cover-letter/>

Cover Letter Series written to improve resume results and get interviews.

Sample Cover Letter

<http://www.collegegrad.com/jobsearch/Best-College-Cover-Letters/Sample-Cover-Letter/>

A sample cover letter written by a college student followed by quick tips

Sample Cover Letters

<http://www.cover-letters.com/>

More than 1,000 cover letter samples and articles with advice on writing cover letters.

Six Basic Parts for Writing a Cover Letter

<http://www.easyjob.net/r/cover-letter/writing-a-cover-letter/>

Dissects the structure of a cover letter into 6 simple parts and elaborates on each.

INTERVIEWS

18 Tips to Ace Your Interview

<http://news.yahoo.com/18-tips-ace-job-interview-173510761.html>

18 simple tips to interview success.

99 Interview Tips That Will Actually Help You Get the Job

<http://passivepanda.com/interview-tips>

99 interview tips that you might not have considered yet.

Mastering the Interview

<http://www.collegegrad.com/jobsearch/Mastering-the-Interview//>

Collection of articles covering all aspects of interview techniques.

McDonalds Interview Tips

http://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en/careers/working_here/interview_tips.html

Short and simple list of interview tips.

Tips for Success— The Interview

http://www.worksmart.ca.gov/tips_interview.html

Interview tips from the State of California.

GENERAL

Frances Bridges: The Trenches

<http://blogs.forbes.com/francesbridges/>

This twenty-something Forbes blogger is a source of inspiration, information and good advice. In a sea of tips on how to write a resume or cover letter (even though that knowledge may be valuable), Bridges' insights into the job market for fellow twenty-somethings is priceless.

Idealist Career Center

<http://www.idealists.org/info/careers>

A variety of resources from Idealist.org to help you explore meaningful career transitions.

Purdue Online Writing Lab

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/681/01/>

Guides to effective workplace writing. Also visit <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/> for help with grammar questions, citations and more.

Riley Guide— Resumes, Cover Letters and Job Search Correspondence

<http://www.rileyguide.com/letters.html>

Articles on writing resumes, cover letters, and other professional documents.

What's Next: Life After Your Service

<http://encorps.nationalserviceresources.org/whatsnext/index.shtml>

Help and resources help you plan for transitions after your service term.

Contributions

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- Typing (2): <http://blog.garanimals.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/typing-test.jpg>
- Interview (2): <http://www.glassdoor.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/interview6.jpg>
- Hands (2): <http://www.alkareemfarms.com/images/relations.jpg>
- Co-workers (2): http://www.sangamsolutions.com/page4/page8/files/istock_000004735385xsmall.jpg
- NCCC Team (3): http://www.nationalservicegear.org/images/landing_page_images/banner_americorps_nccc.jpg
- Typing (4): <http://www.powerful-sample-resume-formats.com/image-files/resume-cover-letter.jpg>
- Writing (5): http://serc.carleton.edu/images/sp/carl_ltc/wacn/writing.jpg
- Cover LetteràInterview (9): [coverletterpic: http://www.out-smarts.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/iStock_000010060651XSmall.jpg](http://www.out-smarts.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/iStock_000010060651XSmall.jpg)
- Man practicing in mirror (11): http://www.visualphotos.com/photo/2x3795695/man_practicing_speech_in_office_washroom_mirror_my_aud_0023.jpg
- Interview (12)<http://northwesternucs.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/interviewing-the-boss.jpg>
- Networking event(13): <http://www.uvm.edu/~career/images/Blogimages/networkingevent.jpg>
- Paper people (14): http://images.businessweek.com/ss/06/02/social_networking/image/intro.jpg
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- Becoming an NCCC Alum
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- Travel Abroad
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