



THE SCIENCE OF SUCCESS.

North Dakota State College of Science

800 Sixth Street North • Wahpeton, ND 58076-0002

Job Seeking Guide

Student Success and Career Services

**Tech Center 12
(701) 671-2258**

**ndscs.careerservices@ndscs.edu
www.ndscs.edu/careerservices**

Dear Student,

The North Dakota State College of Science, Student Success and Career Services office can help you succeed with job placement in today's dynamic labor market.

We offer a variety of job seeking services. Below is a list of items you can find assistance in:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ▪ <i>How to write a cover letter</i> | ▪ <i>Cover letter critiquing</i> |
| ▪ <i>How to prepare an effective resume</i> | ▪ <i>Resume critiquing</i> |
| ▪ <i>How to fill out an application</i> | ▪ <i>Application critiquing</i> |
| ▪ <i>Interview tips</i> | ▪ <i>Interview questions</i> |
| ▪ <i>Interview checklist</i> | ▪ <i>How to write a thank you note</i> |
| ▪ <i>How to write an acceptance letter</i> | ▪ <i>Occupational Outlook Handbook</i> |
| ▪ <i>Mock interviewing skills</i> | ▪ <i>How to write a non-acceptance letter</i> |

While focusing on reaching out for employment for our students, the Career Services office also strives to educate our students in the job seeking process and procedures necessary for our students to help themselves now and in years to come.

We offer Career Fairs in the fall and in the spring of each year, both for part-time and full-time employment. A variety of employers come to the Career Fairs, both local and national.

NDSCS Career Services has job postings and example resources online at the Career Services web page. The address is: www.ndscs.edu/careerservices/. Here you can see everything that is included in this booklet. You can also view job postings that have been posted within the last 30 days. Jobs are posted for full-time, part-time & Cooperative Education experiences.

Although NDSCS offers a variety of resources, you are the most important component in guaranteeing job placement success. If you need assistance with mock interviewing, resume critiquing, constructing a cover letter or thank you, we can help you.

Please stop by or set up an appointment with NDSCS Career Services. We are located in the Tech Center Room 12 or by phone 701-671-2258.

We wish you much success in your career search.

Sincerely,

*Jane Vangsness Frisch
Director of Student Success and Career Services
Jane.Vangsness@ndscs.edu*

*Kijia Homes
Administrative Assistant
Kijia.Homes@ndscs.edu*

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How to find a job

Job lead sources:

When conducting a job search you should use as many job lead sources as you can develop or find, don't rely on only one source, i.e. the newspaper.

Here are additional job lead sources:

- Federal Government
- Job Service offices
- Career Service offices
- Chamber of Commerce offices
- Library (periodical & reference sections)
- Professional Journals
- Professional Newsletters
- Trade Unions
- Business sections of newspapers
- Ads in all publications
- Organizations (professional/social)
- Professional/Business Directories
- Yellow Pages
- City, County and State Government
- Radio & Television advertisements
- Current periodicals
- Bookstores

Remember many of these traditional resources like the newspaper, local unions, and professional affiliations have websites and you can find job openings through newsletters, newspapers and the internet.

For example, if you are looking for a job in Boston, Massachusetts in sheet metal worker, you will find job openings in the newspaper

Boston Herald

Boston Herald website

Sheet metal workers Union Website-<http://www.smw17boston.org/>

Phone the local Union office

Join the Union to receive newsletter with job postings

Networking

Networking is a process that coordinates and expands your job search by meeting and talking with others. Who are the people who can be part of your job search network?

- People Close To You: All your friends, relatives, in-laws, classmates, old acquaintances and neighbors.
- People You Know: Professionals utilized in your daily activities such as a hairdresser, your doctor, the dentist, your clergy person, the clerk(s) at your favorite stores, instructors, etc.
- People You Should Know: Professionals who are now working in the occupations you are seeking to enter.

Telephone Networking

One of the best methods of obtaining fast action in a job search is using the telephone. The best feature of a telephone job search is that you take greater control over the events related to the job search.

Before you call anyone or follow-up a mail contact, you need to develop a telephone script to use during your contacts. A telephone script will assist you by creating a short presentation of yourself, your skills and abilities.

Using the telephone and clearly presenting your skills (which comes from reading your script) makes it possible to get interviews, instructions, and information more quickly, and/or more contact names with which to network.

The Call Script

Dial the number. Remember to sound friendly and confident.

If the number is a general information number, ask the secretary for Mr./Ms. _____. When his/her secretary answers, ask for the person by first name.

If the secretary asks what it is about or in reference to, indicate that _____ (the person in your network) asked that you call Mr./Ms. _____ today on a personal matter.

After you are transferred be ready to introduce yourself as an acquaintance or close friend of _____. Then read your script to the person.

Request an interview for later in the day. Mention two different times when you would be available. If your goal is an interview it's in your best interest to meet with the person no later than the next day.

If the person is absolutely not available, consider a later date or ask to take a few minutes of their time in order to stop by and present your resume. You can possibly set up a telephone interview after the person has had a chance to see your professional image and winning smile.

If the person is absolute about not meeting with you or will not have any openings, ask if there is someone he/she could recommend who could use a person with your skills or someone with more information about the kind of work you are seeking. Don't get off the phone without at least one networking contact. You may have to rephrase the question and ask more than once.

If you have succeeded, get directions to the interview. Write them down. Don't be late.

Say thank you and hang up

Complete your tracking form before doing anything else. Also, send a confirmation and thank you letter immediately, whether you are meeting tomorrow or at a later date.

Employment agencies

Employment agencies or private personnel placement services provide employment opportunities for applicants seeking employment. Some employment agencies charge employees for services, some charge the employer and some may charge both a fee for services. You will also find employment agencies which charge no fee, like Job Service of ND or MN Workforce Centers.

You can search the Yellow Pages or the internet to find a listing of employment agencies to contact for an appointment.

Also consider applying and working for temporary agencies. Many temporary positions can lead to full time permanent employment

Job Searching on the Internet

The internet has become a highly utilized tool for job seeking. If you are interested in looking for employment in a specific area or in a specific location, the internet can help you narrow your job search. You can find your dream job! In addition to searching for jobs, you can post your resume, compare salaries and find career advice and research. Everyday thousands of new jobs are listed.

Area Job Search Sites

www.careerfargo.com

www.jobsnd.com (North Dakota Job Service)

www.JobDig.com

www.Jobshq.net

www.northdakotahasjobs.com

www.mn-jobs.com

General and National Job Search Sites

<http://www.monster.com>

<http://www.Careerbuilder.com>

<http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/>

<http://www.careerbank.com>

<http://jobseeking.com>

<http://www.aftercollege.com/>

<http://www.job.com/my.job/sup/jsOn=1><http://www.ajb.org/>

<http://www.bestjobsusa.com/index-jsk-ie.asp>

<http://www.collegerecruiter.com/>

<http://flipdog.com/>

<http://www.gojobs.com/>

http://seeker.dice.com/profman/searchEngineMarketing.jsp?rel_code=100

<http://www.jobbankusa.com/>

<http://www.usjobs.com/>

Internship/Entry Level Job Sites

<http://www.NDInterns.com>

<http://internships.wetfeet.com/>

<http://www.magazine.org/careers/Internships/>

<https://www.internjobs.com/>

<http://www.house.gov/lowley/federalinterns.html>

Summer Jobs

<http://www.summerjobs.com/>

North Dakota Resources

ND resources on the internet

<http://www.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/reference/ndakota.php>

ND occupational digest

<http://www.planningyourcareer.com/>

ND state jobs

<http://www.state.nd.us/hrms/redirect.htm>

Minnesota

MN Workforce Centers

<http://www.mnworkforcecenter.org/jobseekers.htm>

MN State Jobs

<http://www.doer.state.mn.us/stf-bltn/jobs2/index.htm>

Minnesota Jobs

<http://www.mn-jobs.com>

Montana

MT State Jobs

<http://discoveringmontana.com/statejobs/statejobs.asp>

MT Job Link

<http://www.mtjoblinc.com/>

South Dakota

SD Internships

<http://www.state.sd.us/bop/Jobs/Intern/home.htm>

SD Bureau of Personnel

<http://www.state.sd.us/applications/pr47jobs/home.htm>

US Government

US Federal Jobs

<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>

Partnership for Public Service

http://www.ourpublicservice.org/workforusa/workforusa_list.htm?cat_id=43

Federal Government jobs for students

<http://www.studentjobs.gov/>

Federal jobs for college graduates web site

<https://www.magiclink.com/web/jobcofji/>

Company Websites

If you are interested in working for a particular company, check out the internet.

Many companies have websites which list career opportunities.

Career Fairs

There are many job and career fairs in the region or area where you may be looking for employment. Most of these fairs attract numerous employers, offering a variety of jobs in various industries, while other events feature jobs with a specific employer or industry. To check for job fairs in the area you are looking you can review the local newspaper for more information, checking out website for city the company is located in or near, or check out a company's website directly. These fairs are open to the public.

Cyber Job Fairs

A new trend in job fairs is virtual online job fairs. You can participate in a job fair from your computer. Many of the virtual online job fairs require pre registering. Here are a few on line fairs sites.

<http://www.jobweb.com/employ/fairs/>

www.HBCU-Careers.net

<http://www.job-hunt.org/fairs.shtml>

<http://jobsearchtech.about.com/cs/jobfairs9/?term>

<http://www.preferredjobs.com/jobfair/s=online+career>

Career Fair Tips

Dress Casual but Neat

Your meeting with company representatives at the Career Fair is your first impression to the rest of the company. If you do not impress them the first time you meet, you may not get a second chance! Plan in advance what you are going to wear, and be sure everything is neat, clean and pressed. Simple and conservative attire is usually best.

Update Your Resume

Before the fair, review your resume. Is it attractive and error free? Does it "sell" your skills to the company representative? Is it targeted to the type of employment you are currently seeking? Bring a couple dozen professional-quality copies with you to the fair.

Practice What You Will Say

There are a few basic questions you will probably be asked all day. One of them will be "What type of job are you looking for?" If you do not have an answer ready for this question you will not look prepared. Although it may be partly true, do not say you will take any job they have. Commit to a specific type of job such as customer service support, clerical assistant, accounting clerk, welder, etc. If you do not want to be specific, offer your experience: "I have skills in sales, marketing and advertising, and I am interested in opportunities with your company."

Be Prepared to Discuss Anything

You might be asked to describe your strengths and skills, experience, special training or qualifications for a specific job. Someone might ask you why you left your previous job or why you are looking for a career change. If you are prepared to field a variety of questions, your tact and skill will show you as a superior candidate.

Arrange for Some Daycare

If possible, arrange for someone to watch your child (ren) while you are speaking to employers. Although children and fairs usually go together, a Career Fair is a serious opportunity to meet with prospective employers. Be as professional here as you would be at a job interview.

Network while You Wait

Talk to fellow job seekers while you are waiting to speak to a specific employer. Who have they talked to? Have they heard of anyone hiring someone with your background?

Career Fair Success

Preparation

Obtain a list of employers – Plan your strategy for the companies you want to talk to. Do research on the companies on the web, call the company for additional information or go to your local library. Prepare questions to ask the company representative.

A perfect resume is a must – Your resume is an opportunity to present yourself. Make it a presentation you can be proud of. Proof your resume for errors. If you are looking for more than one type of work, you may need more than one type of resume.

Learn to sell yourself – You have only a few minutes to introduce yourself, and spark the company representative's interest in you for a future, more formal interview. This takes practice. Use a mirror, tape recorder or a friend! BE POSITIVE!

Professionalism

Be remembered for the "right" reasons – Now is not the time to have too creative of a resume or wear unusual clothing.

Be polite at all times – The person you meet in the parking lot, hallway or restroom may be the company recruiter you will see later in the day.

Recruiters see you – As a potential future representative of their company, display confidence, enthusiasm and the ability to think and speak "on your feet" – and under pressure.

Get the representatives business card – Discuss how and when to follow up. A follow up letter is an appropriate way to reiterate your qualifications, what you know about the company and why you are a "good fit."

Patience

Make notes – After you have spoken to the representative, take the time to regroup and prepare to follow-up.

Statistics – Career Fair statistics show that up to 49% of the candidates who prepare in advance can receive interviews at the fair, and 65% of those candidates receive job offers. This process can take three months or longer (the larger the company, the longer this may take).

Questions to ask company representatives at the career fair

- What types of career opportunities does your organization offer?
- What majors does your organization typically hire? What kinds of positions do you offer in my major?
- What are the job responsibilities for that type of position?
- Are you aware of related occupations that I would be qualified for with the background/major I have or am planning to pursue?
- How did you get into the organization/career field? What is your background? How does it relate to the position?
- Could I set up a time to visit you at your workplace to talk more about what you do?
- Do you have co-op, internship or summer job opportunities for someone in my major?
- Do you know of other contacts that might be helpful to me?
- May I contact you if I need more information?
- What type of products (or services) does your company:
 - Manufacture?
 - Sell?
 - Service?
 - Provide?
- Do you have any description of current openings at your company?
- What types of positions do you have trouble filling? Why?
- Do you have any literature describing your company?
- Is your work load seasonal?
- Do you ever need to hire someone with _____background?
- I am interested in _____, do you ever need someone in this area?
- What are the main skills or characteristics that you look for in an employee?
- Could you look at my resume and tell me what you like about it, and what you would suggest that I change?
- Can you start someone part-time until school is out for the summer?
- How can a job applicant convince you to call them for an interview?
- If you have interviewed someone for a job, do you mind if they call to find out the status of your hiring process?
- If you do not have an available opening that fits my background now, but I would like to work for your company, how often could I call without becoming a pest? Who should I ask for?
- What skills do you find most marketable in your industry today?

Always thank the employer for talking to you, and give them a copy of your resume if you have one (which you should).

Facebook Advisory

Facebook, it's a great place to meet new people, create long-lasting friendships with people from high school, college and graduate school. But it can also be a final determination for an interview process – job offer.

Be advised: Facebook is used by many employers as a way to find prospective employees and get to know current applicants. Inappropriate material should not be included on your page. Pictures of academic achievement, extra-curricular activities, and banquets are appropriate.

Pay attention to comments made that are added to your page. Should they be deleted? Are they appropriate?

Remember: If you are skeptical of whether or not to include something on your page, remove it.

Add such things as accomplishments, career goals, and academic success. Hobbies and interests are beneficial as well.

Remove things such as inappropriate pictures, comments on the wall, videos and graphics.

Make sure your spring break plans are not derogatory or explicit in anyway. Be aware of the groups you have displayed a membership with. Be sure your status is not set to “partying.”

When listing what courses you are taking, do not make up classes like, “Partying 101,” or “Sleeping in 102.” Listing the courses you are currently in, is to your advantage to help you academically.

Telephone Message Advisory

You should be sure to keep your cell phone or your home answering machine message appropriate. Nothing can turn a prospective employer off quicker than an inappropriate message. They may choose not to request an interview at all anymore.

Cover Letter Guide

Heading

Your street address

City, State, Zip

Date (Write out the month, followed by the day and year in Arabic numerals)

Inside Address

Name of Recruiter or Employer or Human Resource Person or Hiring Manager

Title of person listed above

Name of Company

City, State, Zip

Salutation

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. Recruiter or Employer or Human Resource Person or Hiring Manager

Body of Letter

Opening paragraph-FOCUS: Why you are writing this letter

- a. Identifying the position for which you are applying and your source of referral (I am applying for the position of automotive technician which was advertised on the North Dakota State College of Science web site.)
- b. State duration/time of position (semester/year) and your commitment to this time frame

Middle Paragraph-FOCUS: Why interview you

- a. Express your interest in the company and the position (here's where you show you have done your research on the company and have read the complete job description)
- b. Discuss your past work experiences. Remember, potential employers want to get their needs met. Make connection between what you have done in the past and what they need
- c. Discuss your personal traits (organized, self-starter, hard working, creative, etc) as long as they match what the company values

Closing Paragraph-FOCUS: What happens next

- a. Refer to your enclosed resume, which summarizes qualifications and work experience
- b. Indicate your willingness to forward additional personal information or references.
- c. Express your desire for a personal or telephone interview with a company representative. (Make sure the phone number(s) and e-mail address on our resumes are accurate)
- d. Thank the potential employer for his or her time and consideration

Complimentary Close

This paragraph should be consistent with the tone of your letter and is followed by a comma.

Professional letters, or business letters addressed to an individual may close with sincerely or sincerely yours

Signature

Sign your name in ink directly below the complimentary close

Your Name

Type your name as it appears on your resume four spaces down from the complimentary close

Strategies for a pleasing cover letter

Purpose:

- Make it clear you WANT the job, display a good attitude in the letter
- Display a subject line mentioning which position you are applying for OR mention what position you are interested in applying for in your very first paragraph, if not the first sentence of your cover letter.
- Show interest in long-term commitment
- Express the services you can offer

Audience:

- Address the letter to a specific person whenever possible
- Never let an opening statement or sentence in the first paragraph suggest a “no” by the employer
- Consider the company’s timing needs, send the cover letter at the right time
- Down play experiences that may threaten an employer
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the employer

Content:

- Consider listing personal or volunteer experience, if short in experience
- Be sure to include a job reference number if you found the posting online
- If you have recently spoken with the person you are sending the cover letter to, and they asked you to send it, be sure to say so in the first sentence of the cover letter
- At the end of the letter, you might want to mention you will follow up with the employer with a phone call

Organization:

- Restate important qualifications at the end of the letter
- Present the information in ascending order of importance, suggesting the letter gets better as the reader follows
- Mention the consideration of an interview in one paragraph and thank them for considering it in another, therefore mentioning an interview twice

Style:

- Do not sound desperate
- Aggressive letters are short and concise
- Make your cover letter difficult to ignore
- A series of short paragraphs seems to speed the tempo of reading it
- Don’t be afraid to use bullets to express pertinent information you want an employer to see

Tips for writing a great cover letter

- It is suggested you always hand in a cover letter with every resume. A great cover letter:
 - Puts you above the competition
 - Sells your qualifications and achievements
 - Exhibits your knowledge, experience and expertise
 - Develops excitement, interest and action (action, refers to an interview)
- Your cover letter can have an outrageous impact on the quality and success of your job search. Your cover letter is a personal introduction to who you are and what skills you can offer. It is custom made for this specific opportunity and gives you the opportunity to sell yourself, personally and professionally.
- Your cover letter should reflect the skills and experience listed on your resume, but it should not be worded exactly the same. Instead, your cover letter should communicate in a paragraph form the skills you'd like the prospective employer to know you possess.

Ten cover letter pointers

1. **BE SPECIFIC:** "Who" are you? Are you a mechanic? Are you a nurse? Are you an Architect? Are you an Engineer? Employers have very little time to dedicate to the hiring process, so be sure to indicate what type of a position you are looking for right at the beginning of the cover letter, rather than mentioning it at the end of a cover letter. Very few employers take time to figure out what position you are interested in or what suits you best.
2. **PROFESSIONAL & UNIQUE:** Be sure to make your letter personable and visually eye-catching. Be sure to be neat, accurate and precise.
3. **QUALIFICATIONS:** Your cover letter is your opportunity to share your skills and qualifications, experiences, honors and credentials that place you above the rest. This is not a time to be modest, so be sure to emphasize your most pertinent qualifications.
4. **ACHIEVEMENTS:** Let your achievements shine. Emphasize on your most relevant achievements according to your audience. By this, focus on achievements in your field of study or job you are applying for. For example, SkillsUSA Award for 1st place in Automotive Technology – if you are applying for an Automotive Technician position. i.e. You wouldn't write an award for State Wrestling Champ in high school, because it doesn't pertain to your field of study.

5. **BE INFORMED:** Do your research for the company you are interested in working at. Ask a friend, pick up a brochure, or check out the company's web site, if they have one. For example, changes within the company, challenges, market opportunities, services or management changes. Relate specifically to demonstrate how your services can assist the company in reaching these goals.
6. **WHY:** Explain why you want to work for this specific company. Is it for the outstanding reputation the company holds? Is it the products and services? Is it the market potential? Even company management likes to be told they are doing a good job, so mention what it is they are doing **RIGHT** that caught your attention. Then tell them you'd like to be a part of that.
7. **NEAT & CLEAN:** This is a business document, not something that is advertised, so to speak. So be sure to keep your resume, clean, neat and presentable. Attractive, but conservative, "over doing it" is not recommended.
8. **TRIPLE CHECK:** Check your cover letter over before sending it out to a prospective employer. Have a mentor, Career Services professional, or instructor check it over for you as well. Employers have not had the opportunity to meet you yet, just this piece of paper. So be sure this cover letter reflects what you want it to say. Even a slight error could throw your opportunity from the running of a job position.
9. **CONSISE:** Cover letters are not reports. A one-page cover letter is recommended in nearly all circumstances.
10. **ASK FOR THE INTERVIEW:** A refresher is always a good idea! Why are you writing this letter? –To get an interview. So, don't be afraid to ask for an interview.

Sample Cover Letter 1

145 Sheyenne Lane
Yourtown, ND 58076

June 21, 2012

NAME of Hiring Person
TITLE of Hiring Person (if known)
Company's Name
Address of Company
City/State/Zip

Dear Name of Person Hiring: (if known, otherwise, Hiring Manager:)

I am writing to apply for the position of (put title of open position) which was listed on (put where you heard about the position). This position appeals to me very much and I have enclosed my resume for your consideration.

In May, 2007, I will be graduating with an Associate of Applied Science degree in Culinary Arts. My education and work experience have given me culinary understanding with tools, equipment, materials and products used in food service and the hospitality industry. I have experience in preparation of appetizers, salads, soups, sauces, entrees and desserts. In addition, I am familiar with health and sanitation conditions and food protection. I have planned menus to meet the nutritional needs and desires of customers, as well as, food cost and portion control. I am able to food plan and purchase for a variety of food industries including catering, gourmet foods, banquet services or restaurants. My past work experience includes (list past jobs). These positions have taught me to handle pressure, meet deadlines and to be highly organized which makes me the perfect fit for this position.

I have enclosed my resume for your consideration and I would be happy to forward any additional information you may need. Please consider my request for a personal interview so I can thoroughly share my qualifications with you. You may contact me at (701) 671-000 or jane.doe@ndscs.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe
Enclosure (1)

Sample Cover Letter 2

5525 Wildcat Blvd.
Wahpeton, ND 58076

June 21, 2006

Mr. Donald Trump
Human Resource Director
Trump Tower Marketing
56397 Trump Road
New York, NY 44216

Dear Mr. Trump,

I am writing to apply for the position of assistant marketing director which was listed on your company's website. This position appeals to me very much and I have enclosed my resume and references for your consideration.

During my two years at North Dakota State College of Science, I have heard many positive comments about Trump Tower Marketing from my instructors. I have also found with deeper research that your company has a strong market position and an excellent training program. I am confident that my extensive background in marketing course work and my direct experience in promoting campus events will contribute to the reputation you have created. Additionally, my summer work experience in retail has given me the skills I need to successfully communicate with colleagues and customers.

I have enclosed my resume for your consideration and I would be happy to forward any additional information you may need. Please consider my request for a personal interview so I can thoroughly share my qualifications. You may contact me at (701) 671-2200 or Jane.Doe@ndscs.edu.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

Enclosure (1)

How to prepare an effective resume

1. Resume essentials

Before you write, take time to do a self-assessment on paper. Outline your skills and abilities as well as your work experience and activities. This will make it easier to prepare a thorough resume.

2. The content of your resume

Name, address, telephone, e-mail address

All your contact information should go at the top of your resume

- Avoid nicknames
- Use a permanent address. Use your parents' address, a friend's address, or the address you plan to use after graduation
- Use a permanent telephone number and include the area code. If you have an answering machine, record a neutral greeting
- Add your e-mail address that sounds professional
- Include your web site address only if the web page reflects your professional ambitions

Objective or Summary

An objective tells potential employers the sort of work you're hoping to do

- Be specific about the job you want. For example: To obtain an entry level position within a financial institution requiring strong analytical and organizational skills
- Tailor your objective to each employer you target/every job you seek

Education

New graduates without a lot of work experience should list their educational information first.

- Your most recent educational information is listed first
- Include your spelled out degree (Associates in Applied Science in...) major, institution attended, minor/concentration, graduation or anticipated graduation date
- Add your grade point average (GPA) if it is higher than a 3.0
- Mention academic honors
- Outline of classes relevant to prospective job

Work Experience

Briefly give the employer an overview of work that has taught you skills. Describe your job duties using **action** words. Use a separate bullet for each duty. Include your work experience in reverse chronological order – that is, put your last job first and work backwards to your first, relevant job.

- Title of position
- Name of organization
- Location of work (town, state)
- Dates of employment
- Describe your work responsibilities with emphasis on **specific skills** and achievements

Other information

A staff member at the Career Services office can advise you on the other information to add to your resume. The following are other headings you may use...

- Key or special skills or competencies
- Volunteer Experience
- Extracurricular Involvement
- Activities or Clubs
- Certifications
- Military Service
- Computer Skills
- Honors and Achievements

References

You should have three to five people who can speak to your professional skills. Do not include your reference information on your resume. This should be a separate sheet with the same heading as on your resume.

NOTE! Ask people if they are willing to serve as reference before you give their names to a potential employer. Make sure you get their correct contact information at that time.

3. Resume Checkup

You've written your resume. It's time to have it reviewed and critiqued by Career Services. You can also take the following steps to ensure quality:

Content:

- Run a spell check on your computer before anyone sees your resume
- Get a friend (and English major would do nicely) to do a grammar review
- Ask another friend to proofread. The more people who see your resume, the more likely that misspelled words and awkward phrases will be seen (and corrected).

Design:

These tips will make your resume easier to read and/or scan into an employer database.

- Use white or off-white 8 – ½ x 11 – inch paper
- Print on one side of the paper
- Use a font size of 10 – 14 points
- Use only one non-decorative typeface
- Avoid italics, script, and underlined words
- Do not fold or staple your resume
- If you must mail your resume, put it in a large envelope
- Format all sections the same, i.e. dates, locations, qualifications etc.
- If you are going to email your resume, convert it to a PDF.

Resume writing tips

- 1) **Write your resume yourself.** It's alright to seek help in where to begin, what it should say and initial format, but your resume will best reflect you, if you write it yourself. This will force you to organize your thoughts and background information.
- 2) **Develop an error-free resume.** Even the smallest grammatical or spelling error can create a negative impression. So be sure to review it, then review it again!
- 3) **Make a high-quality resume.** Employers will be turned off by poor paper quality, bad type quality or anything that makes the physical appearance look cheap. The main key to remember, use quality paper and keep it neat and well-printed on the page.
- 4) **Important/Concise.** No resume should consist of more than one page. Employers barely have enough time to read an entire one page resume, much less two. Use short fragments and action words. If it doesn't relate to your objective, remove it!
- 5) **Be Sincere.** Do not overemphasize your qualifications. Most employers will see right through this and not give you an opportunity. It will not be to your advantage if you get a job you can't manage.
- 6) **Be positive.** A resume is not the time to be modest. Sell your qualifications, accomplishments and the results. Do not display any faults.
- 7) **Be precise.** Instead of saying, "I have great people skills," say, "I planned and organized a Sales events comprising of over 48 sales representatives and banking personnel." Being specific proves your success, rather than hoping the employer believes you. You should also use numbers whenever possible.
- 8) **References.** Be sure to contact your references and let them know what type of job you are applying for, so they recognize which skills of yours they should reflect on with the prospective employer. Let them know they should be prepared for the phone call. A reference page should be included on the following page of your resume. It should not be included on your resume page. Simply write, "References available upon request" along the bottom of the resume page.
- 9) **Convert to PDF.** If you plan to email or up load your resume or cover letter convert the document to a pdf. This will insure that your formatting won't change when you upload or email the documents. You can do this for free by going to www.freepdfconvert.com.

Reasons your resume is failing you

1. No job specification

Your resume should include an objective which simply states what position you are seeking. Employers are far too busy to match up resumes with which job position would work best for you. Be clear and concise.

2. Missing keyword/phrases

When applying for a job, be sure to check out the job description, which will include the keywords and phrases you should include in your resume. These words are typically nouns like job titles and technical skills.

3. No proof of experience

Give examples of proven success, anyone can list jobs obtained, proving your success will place you above the rest. Provide an example of success.

4. Inclusion of personal pronouns and articles

Get rid of all personal pronouns like, "the," "a," and "an." By removing the "I," "me," and "my" it frees up space and makes your resume appear more objective.

5. Insignificant information

If you have irrelative information in your resume, it keeps the prospective employer from seeing your vital selling points. Never include information about your marital status, personal situation, hobbies or interests unless they are relevant to the job you are applying for.

6. Deficient formatting

A chronological format is most effective when listing job history. Be sure to have a format with the following headings, in the following order:

- Header (Your name, address, phone number, email address)
- Objective (Fragment stating what position you are seeking)
- Education (List career you obtained/will obtain, where and when)
- Work Experience (chronological listing of previous positions)
- Qualifications (optional)
- Certifications (optional)
- References available upon request (Centered at the bottom of the page)

7. Misspelled words/blunders

No matter what type of position you are applying for, whether technical or administrative, your cover letter and resume should be error free. Proofread your resume carefully and have a Career Services professional look it over for you.

Personal Characteristics

Activate	Eager	Logical	Resourceful
Accurate	Easy Going	Loyal	Responsible
Adaptable	Efficient	Mature	Retiring
Adventurous	Emotional	Methodical	Robust
Affectionate	Energetic	Meticulous	Self-confident
Aggressive	Enterprising	Mild	Self-controlled
Alert	Enthusiastic	Moderate	Sensible
Ambitious	Fair-minded	Modest	Sensitive
Artistic	Farsighted	Natural	Serious
Assertive	Firm	Obliging	Sharp-witted
Attractive	Flexible	Open-minded	Sincere
Bold	Forceful	Opportunistic	Sociable
Broad-minded	Formal	Optimistic	Spontaneous
Business-like	Frank	Organized	Stable
Calm	Friendly	Original	Steadfast
Capable	Fun-loving	Outgoing	Steady
Careful	Generous	Painstaking	Strong
Cautious	Gentle	Patient	Strong-minded
Cheerful	Good-natured	Peaceable	Sympathetic
Clear-Thinking	Happy-go-lucky	Persevering	Tactful
Clever	Healthy	Pleasant	Teachable
Competent	Helpful	Poised	Tenacious
Confident	Honest	Polite	Thorough
Conscientious	Humorous	Popular	Tolerant
Conservative	Idealistic	Practical	Tough
Considerate	Imaginative	Precise	Trusting
Cooperative	Independent	Progressive	Trustworthy
Courageous	Individualistic	Prudent	Unaffected
Creative	Industrious	Purposeful	Unassuming
Curious	Informal	Quick	Understanding
Daring	Ingenious	Quiet	Uninhibited
Deliberate	Intellectual	Rational	Verbal
Democratic	Intelligent	Realistic	Versatile
Dependable	Inventive	Reasonable	Warm
Determined	Kind	Reflexive	Wholesome
Dignified	Leisurely	Relaxed	
Dominate	Light-hearted	Reliable	
	Likeable	Reserved	

Resume Action Verb List

Accelerate	Compose	Endure	Initiate	Perceive	Review
Accomplish	Comprehend	Engineer	Innovate	Perform	Scan
Achieve	Compute	Ensured	Inspect	Persist	Schedule
Acquire	Concentrate	Entertain	Inspire	Persuade	Screen
Act/Perform	Conceptualize	Establish	Install	Photograph	Search
Adapt	Conclude	Estimate	Institute	Place	Secure
Administer	Conduct	Evaluate	Instruct	Plan	Separate
Advance	Confront	Examine	Integrate	Predict	Select
Advertise	Connect	Exchange	Interact	Prepare	Serve
Advise	Consolidate	Execute	Interpret	Present	Shape
Analyze	Construct	Exhibit	Interview	Preside	Sketch
Anticipate	Contact	Expedite	Inventory	Print	Solve
Apply	Contract	Explain	Investigate	Problem-solve	Sort
Appraise	Control	Fabricated	Judge	Process	Speak
Approve	Convert	Facilitate	Justify	Procure	Specified
Arrange	Cooperate	Filed	Lead	Produce	Staff
Assemble	Coordinate	Familiarize	Lift	Program	Standardize
Assess	Copy	Figure	Liquidate	Promote	Steer
Assist	Correspond	Financed	Listen	Proofread	Stimulate
Assign	Corroborated	Fit	Load	Protect	Stock
Attain	Counsel	Follow	Locate	Provide	Streamline
Audit	Create	Forecast	Made	Publicize	Strengthen
Authorize	Critique	Foresee	Maintain	Publish	Structure
Automate	Cultivate	Forge	Manage	Purchase	Study
Balance	Decide	Formalize	Manipulate	Push	Summarize
Bargain	Decrease	Formulate	Market	Question	Supervise
Budget	Define	Gather	Master	Rate	Support
Build	Delegate	Generate	Measure	Read	Survey
Buy	Demonstrate	Govern	Mediate	Reason	Systemize
Calculate	Describe	Grade	Memorize	Recommend	Teach
Care	Designate	Grind	Mentor	Reconcile	Tailor
Carry	Design	Grow	Merchandise	Record	Track
Catalog	Detail	Guide	Model	Recruit	Train
Chair	Detect	Handle	Moderate	Redesign	Transcribe
Change	Develop	Help	Modify	Reduce	Transfer
Chart	Devise	Hire	Monitor	Refer	Transform
Choose	Diagnose	Identify	Motivate	Reinforce	Transmit
Classify	Discover	Illustrate	Move	Relate	Translate
Clean	Display	Imagine	Navigate	Reorganize	Travel
Clerk	Distribute	Implement	Negotiate	Repair	Tutored
Coach	Documented	Improve	Nurture	Report	Type
Collaborate	Draft	Improvise	Observe	Represent	Unify
Collect	Draw	Increase	Obtain	Research	Update
Color	Edit	Index	Operate	Resolve	Upgrade
Communicate	Educate	Influence	Order	Respond	Utilize
Compare	Employed	Organize	Restore	Visualize	
Compile	Encourage	Originate	Retrieve	Volunteer	
Complete	Enforced	Participate	Revise	Write	

Jane Deere
6652 Thumper Road
Hollywood, ND 99999
(701) 555-5555
Jane.Deere@ndscs.edu

Objective

To obtain a full-time Culinary Arts position that best utilizes skills obtained from my education and past work experience.

Education

Associate of Applied Science in Culinary Arts	May 2012
North Dakota State College of Science, Wahpeton, ND	

Work Experience

Cook	Jan 2010- Present
Roxy's Fry Pit, Greenville, ND	

- Responsible for baking, cooking quick order food and salads.
- Created five dinner entrées and three deserts for the new menu.
- Learned how to manage time efficiently.

Dairy & Frozen Stocking Clerk	Jan 2009- Dec 2009
Barry's Food Market, Minot, ND	

- Unloaded freight, stocked dairy and frozen foods departments.
- Cleaned and maintained four freezers and refrigerators.

Checker	Mar 2007- Sept 2008
SupplyMart, Prairie Land, ND	

- Assisted customers with their purchases.
 - Balanced and audited up to seven tills at closing.
-

Skills & Achievements

- | | |
|--|------|
| • Proficient at operating industrial mixers and fryers | |
| • 1 st place Culinary Arts Competition | 2011 |
| • Janice French Award | 2010 |
-

Clubs & Volunteer Activities

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • Culinary Club | Aug 2010- Present |
| • Fort Mandan Foundation, planting trees | June 2010 |
| • Chahinkapa Zoo, painting fences | Sep 2009 |

Jane Deere
6652 Thumper Road
Hollywood, ND 99999
(701) 555-5555
Jane.Deere@ndscs.edu

References:

Gordon Bosworth

Head Chef of Roxy's Fry Pit
990 Long Lake Road
Greenville, ND 66552
(555) 555-5555
Gordon.Bosworth@roxys.com

Bill Brandson

Owner of Barry's Food Market
233 Hunter Boulevard
Minot, ND 66542
(555) 555-5555
Bill.Brandson@yahoo.com

Rory Quinceton

Department Manager of SupplyMart,
655 Stone Road
Prairie Land, ND 63345
(555) 555-5555
Rory.Quinceton@supplymart.com

Sam Pull

PO Box 55
Huntington, ND 55555

(555) 555-5665
Sam.Pull@hotmail.com

Objective To obtain a full-time Architectural Drafting & Estimating Technology position within your company

Education **Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering** May 2012
North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND
GPA: 3.56

Associate in Applied Science in Architectural Drafting & Estimating Technology May 2009
North Dakota State College of Science, Wahpeton, ND

Associate in Applied Science in Business Management May 2008
North Dakota State College of Science, Wahpeton, ND

Work Experience **Caretaker** May 2009-
Ron's Guest Ranch, Wahpeton, ND June 2011

- Greeted customers, assisted with luggage and learned customer service skills
- Cleaned and maintained guest rooms and common areas

Laborer April 2007-
Packer Construction Company, Big Timber, ND May 2009

- Schedule work crews of up to five general labors for demolition and clean up
- Laid underground pipe and read grade

Independent Contractor

- Tiled floors
- Remodeled house
- Installed sheet rock
- Made & installed cabinets

Military Experience **North Dakota Army National Guard** 2008-Present
Wahpeton, ND

Awards

- President of Helena Building Industries Association (2008)
- Student Senate in Construction Technology (2008-2010)
- Outstanding Vocational Student (2010)
- Outstanding Woods I Student (2011)
- Gold Medal Winner FCCLA Convention in Applied Technology (2011)
- Presidential Honor Scholarship (2009)

Sam Pull

PO Box 55
Huntington, ND 55555

(555) 555-5665
Sam.Pull@hotmail.com

References:

Lydia Gonderes

President of Joe's Car Care Center
400 Elk Road
Northwood, CO 56652
(555) 555-5566
Lydia.Gonderes@yahoo.com

Tim Toolman

Supervisor of Copper Mountain Sports Equipment
889 Cedar Avenue
Goonsberry, WI 56632
(555) 555-9988
Tim.Toolman@goonsberry.com

Perry Merbele

Activities Coordinator of Children's Castle
900 Popple Road
Larity, ND 56623
(555) 336-6622
Perry.Merbele@hotmail.com

Guidelines for writing a good objective

1) Keep away from specific titles.

Job titles vary from business to business. By specifying a specific title, this can clear you from other excellent opportunities such as, “marketing assistant” or “office manager.” It is alright to list a specific job you are seeking in a cover letter, but keep it more open on your resume.

2) Define your responsibility range.

While you are willing to accept a job on many different levels, be clear about what you have the capability of. Many employers may consider you for a position of higher responsibility even if you haven’t had a job like this in the past, as long as you have the skills to support the objective.

3) Embrace your most significant skills.

What are the key qualifications for the position in which you are applying for? You could possibly consider one or more of these qualifications as a requirement for the job you seek. Be sure your resume reflects support of these skills with specific examples.

4) Consider specifics important to you.

If you narrow alternatives, it may eliminate you from qualifying job opportunities. But if there is a specific area you really want to work in, it may be worth it to you. For instance, “speech therapist” or “Physical Training Management.”

Types of References

Employment references

Former employers or direct supervisors

Professional references

People who worked with you or know you in your work environment

Academic references

Teachers and others who can talk about your school accomplishments

Personal references

People who know you only socially

Some applications may contain questions that are tricky or illegal. Questions about age, sex, disabilities, health, marriage status, children or race may be inappropriate. It is up to you how you respond to these questions. Generally, if the question does not raise a problem, answer it. If it does, then you may want to use N/A or a dash.

How to fill out an application to get the job

Applications are a very common way of applying for a job. Please make sure to read the job description to see if the company just wants the application or if they also require a cover letter, resume and references.

How your application should look:

Application should be:

- Neat
- No errors in grammar or spelling
- Use black ink or type if you are seeking a professional job
- Fill out the application completely. Leave no blank spaces. Use N/A (not applicable) if the section does not apply to you
- Provide complete information like dates, address and telephone numbers

How to fill out your application:

- Follow directions
- Read the entire application before you begin
- Pay close attention to what is being asked and how you respond.
 - *For example, “when are you available to begin work”, if you can start right away put down “immediately,” otherwise put the date you can start.
- Always use positive words to describe your work experience or to paint a positive picture of yourself. Avoid using negative information.
 - *For example, on “reasons for leaving a job”, use terminology that is not negative.
 - *If you were fired or terminated for cause, use “will discuss in interview” (In the interview you can explain the circumstances and reasons but if you are screened out before the interview, you won’t get the chance to explain).
 - *Do not use the word “laid off.” Instead, give the reason for the lay off. Use “reduction in force”, “completion of job” or “company no longer in business”.
 - * Never use “quit” or “resigned” or “personal” or “health”. Instead use, “returned to school”, “seeking better opportunity”, “seeking career advancement”, “relocation”
- Remember it is important to be truthful on your application. The information you provide will become part of your permanent record when hired. False information can be grounds for dismissal. However, do not volunteer information the employer is not seeking.
- Be specific on the job for which you are applying. Never leave this question blank because an employer will not take the time to determine where you fit in his or her business. If the job is advertised or you are looking for a specific position, enter the job title. If you do not know the job title put the department you are interested in working in.
- Target your qualifications to the specific requirements of the job. Previous work experience should be clear and concise. Keep a list of your significant skills to use when filling out an application.
- When asked about salary requirements use “open” or “negotiable”. This is a question which can knock you out of being considered. Use “open” or “negotiable” even when the wage is listed.
- Do not write “see resume”. Answer all questions even if the answer is on the resume.

Interviewing Tips

Prior to the Interview

- Research the company
- Doing your homework on the organization before the interview shows the recruiter that you care about their purposes and goals
- All organizations, large or small, profit or nonprofit, love to be loved
- If you have gone to the trouble to know something about the company, recruiters are always favorably impressed with you
- Practice your answers to interview questions
- Candidates who have done their homework are better able to discuss how their experiences and qualifications match-up with the company's needs
- Candidates who know the company can also talk about how they can make an immediate contribution to the business
- Plan what you are going to wear to the interview
- It is important to look professional and well-groomed. You may want to call the company and find out what the company's dress code is prior to the interview
- Visit the company in advance
- You don't want to be late for the interview. Before the interview find out how much time it will take you to get to the company. Once you know the time it takes to get to the company add on additional time in case of traffic and to ensure you will arrive early

The Day of the Interview

- Take extra resumes with you
- Take a pad of paper and pen to take notes
- Arrive early
- Be prepared to give examples of your skills at the interview

At the Interview

- Announce yourself to the receptionist in a professional manner when arriving for the interview
- Greet your interviewer(s) with a firm handshake
- The first impression can be a great beginning or a quick ending—to your interview
- Practice good nonverbal communication
- Smiling and making eye contact during the interview demonstrates confidence and will help you connect with interviewer
- Speak slowly, clearly and pause to think and use appropriate language
- When an interviewer asks for an example of a time when you did something, the interviewer is seeking a sample of past behavior. If you fail to relate a specific example, you not only don't answer the questions but you also miss an opportunity to prove your ability and tell about your skills
- Be honest
- When responding to an interviewer's questions answer honestly. Do not tell the interviewer what they want to hear unless you have the skills they are looking for

- Be assertive
- But don't be overly confident. Attitude will play a key role in your interview success.
- There is a fine balance between confidence, professionalism and modesty. It is important to bring energy and enthusiasm to the interview
- Listen
- From the beginning of the interview, your interviewer is giving you information. If you are not listening you may miss an opportunity
- Maintain the three C's during the interview
- Remain cool, calm and confident. You know you can do the job, make sure the interviewer believes you can
- Ask questions
- When the interviewer asks if you have any questions, it is extremely important to ask questions to demonstrate an interest in what goes on in the company. The best questions come from listening to what is asked during the interview and asking additional questions
- Ask the interviewer for a business card at the conclusion of the interview
- After the interview you will want to send a thank you note to the interviewer and now you have the proper spelling of the interviewer's name and the address
- Remember to thank the interviewer for his/her time and give a firm handshake

After the Interview

- Follow-up with the interviewer
- By following up with the interviewer after the interview, you could have the edge over another candidate. You can either write a thank you note, send an email or call the interviewer
- Reflect on your interview
- Determine if you had difficulty answering any questions. Did you forget to mention your extracurricular activities.....your volunteer work....other skills?
- Review your resume
- Take a look at your resume to see if you need to add additional information or revise your resume to fit your work experience better

Interview Checklist

The initial impression that you create from your appearance in an interview can have considerable impact on the interviewer's overall evaluation of your suitability for a position. The key here is to dress conservatively. Statistics confirm that applicants who look professional are hired faster, get better jobs and may even start with better salaries.

NOTE: Posture is also a part of your appearance. Stand tall, sit relaxed, be attentive and speak up. While some of these tips may seem to be common sense, candidates tend to forget the dress protocol of a professional interview.

Women

- ☐ Suit or tailored dress of moderate color
- ☐ Beige, taupe, gray or vanilla hosiery
- ☐ Flats or pumps
- ☐ Belts should match shoes
- ☐ Light perfume, if any fragrant aftershave
- ☐ Clean hair and under control
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Clean nails no chipped polish
- ☐ Attaché case or handbag –not both
- ☐ Limited and simple jewelry
- ☐ No chewing gum or smoking
- ☐ Fresh breath

Men

- ☐ Suit or sports jacket and slacks
- ☐ Over the calf socks
- ☐ Polished shoes
- ☐ Fresh shave
- ☐ Neat hair
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Clean nails
- ☐ Attaché case
- ☐ No sagging coat lining
- ☐ No chewing gum
- ☐ Fresh breath

Note: All apparel is clean and pressed. Attention to these details tells the employer whether or not you are serious about the job. Shining shoes is more affordable than buying a new pair, it is important for shoes to be properly maintained.

What is Business-Casual

The foundation of a business casual wardrobe is a classic jacket for both men and women. Men can wear khaki pants, polo-style shirts or sweaters, shirts without ties and loafers. Women can wear pants or trousers, open collared blouses, sweater sets and low heeled shoes. Business casual is not: jeans, beachwear, exercise clothing, stretch pants, t-shirts, gym shoes, anything too revealing or mini-skirts. Unless you are told otherwise, assume appropriate interview attire is BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL.

Frequently asked interview questions

- What do you know about our company?
- What do you know about the position I'm interviewing you for?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
- What are your expectations of this job?
- What do you know about our products and services?
- What would your instructors say about you?
- What motivates you?
- Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?
- What are your own special abilities?
- How would you describe the ideal job for you?
- How would you describe yourself?
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction and why?
- How well do you work under pressure?
- Where do you expect to be in your career within five years? Ten years?
- What do you expect of your future employer?
- What makes you more qualified for this position than other applicants?
- Tell me about the extracurricular activities you were involved in.
- Tell me about a problem you once had on the job. How did you go about resolving the problem?
- Describe for me one or two of the most important accomplishments in your career to date.
- Describe a project you initiated and how it turned out.
- What previous work experience do you think prepared you for this position?
- Are you more comfortable working in a team environment or on your own?
- Why should we hire you?
- Why do you feel that you will be successful?
- What was the last mistake you made?
- What courses at college did you like best? Least? Why?
- What did you learn or gain from your part-time, summer, internship, or co-op experience?
- Tell me about a time when you were dealing with a customer who was unhappy or dissatisfied with a product or service. Describe the situation and your role in responding to the circumstances. What was the outcome?
- Give me an example of a time when you were given a significant amount of responsibility to get some thing done. What was the outcome?
- Describe a goal that you established for yourself. How did you go about achieving it?
- Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a supervisor, co-worker or instructor on something. What did you do and what was the end result?

Interview questions and responses

1. Tell me about yourself.

Recently, I completed my Associate Degree at North Dakota State College of Science. My major was Business Administration. While in college, I participated in Campus Activities Board, Student Senate and intramural athletics. When I wasn't in school, I spent time volunteering at the local nursing home, motorcycled across North Dakota and I like to read.

2. What are you greatest strengths?

My greatest strengths are customer service, organization and meeting deadlines. I believe the customer is number one and I do what it takes to make sure the customer is completely satisfied. I am able to multitask and do several things at once because I am organized and I know how to prioritize my work to meet deadlines.

3. What is your greatest weakness?

My greatest weakness is a weakness to others but a strength for me. I am always on time or even early for meetings, classes or my work day. Others see this as a weakness because it sets me apart from them but I believe being on time is important. *Note: You are turning a weakness into a strength. You do not want to admit a weakness in an interview because this will lessen the interviewer's creditability in you for the position. Instead, look at ways to turn a weakness into a strength.*

4. What do you hope to be doing in five years?

In five years, I hope to be working for your company and enhancing my work experience. Within five years, we will have both made an investment of time, energy and money and I take that investment seriously. I would like to build on my own experience with your company and perhaps, look at opportunities within the company once I have learned all I need to know.

5. What do you know about our company?

I know that your company not only has a regional reputation but a national one as well. I am familiar with your product lines (name the products) and services (name the services). According to your website, your company grossed 12 million in sales last year and you are expected to exceed those this year. I also read that you will be introducing a new product within the next few months. I want to be involved with a company that is nationally recognized and constantly looking for ways to increase sales through new products and services. *Note: Be sure you do your homework before the interview and learn what the company or business is all about.*

6. What would your instructors or former employers say about you if asked?

If you contacted my instructors, they would tell you, I was always on time for class. I completed my assignments on time. I contributed to classroom discussion and I was willing to get involved with special projects. While I attended college, I also had a work study position on campus in dining services. My supervisor would tell you I followed directions well, I was a team player, I was willing to train others and I never missed a scheduled shift.

7. Why should I hire you?

My work experience and college education make me a perfect match for this position. My education has provided me with a solid foundation and understanding of business. It has taught me key elements like human relations, speaking to groups of people and fundamentals like accounting and economics. My work experience includes customer service, working with money and project management. In addition, I would bring other skills to this position like my eagerness, energy and enthusiasm to work with you.

8. Do you have any questions for us?

The next page is full of great questions you can ask employers.

Questions to ask employers

- If hired, would I be filling a newly created position or replacing someone?
- Was my predecessor promoted?
- Would you describe a typical work day and the things I'd be doing?
- How would I be trained or introduced to the job?
- What are the department's goals for the year?
- How many people work in your department? In the company?
- Who are the people I'd be working with and what do they do?
- Can someone in this job be promoted? If so, to what position?
- How would I get feedback on my job performance, if hired?
- If hired, would I report directly to you or to someone else?
- Has the company had a layoff in the last three years? If so, how long was the layoff and was everyone recalled?
- What should I do about follow up on this job?
- What kind of person are you looking to hire for this position?
- Do you have any questions or concerns I could clear up now for you?
- How do my skills, experience, and education differ from those of the ideal candidate?

Sending a thank you note

1. **By sending a thank-you note, you show your interviewer common courtesy and respect.**

Unfortunately, in our busy and often impolite world, we simply don't acknowledge each other's time, efforts and commitments. So in sending a thank-you note, you tell your interviewer in no uncertain terms that you appreciate the time he has given you. After all, he had to give up part or all of the day to be with you, and expend effort learning more about you and what you have to offer.

2. **So few job applicants send thank-you notes that you automatically stand out if you do.**

It's shocking, but the majority of job applicants fail to send thank-you notes after their interviews. Why? Who knows? But the bottom line is that you wind up in a position to shine simply by putting forth the effort of sending a note. Strange, but true.

3. **A thank-you note gives you an opportunity to reiterate points you made during your interview.**

Have you ever left an interview wishing you'd more strongly emphasized a certain skill or experience the employer seemed to be looking for? A thank-you note gives you the chance to do just that. After using the first paragraph of your note to thank your interviewer, you can use a brief second paragraph to touch again upon the key points you made in your interview. You can also use a similar strategy to clean up any interview rough spots you might have had -- i.e., to expand upon or clarify responses you felt were weak or shaky.

4. **A thank-you note lets you make points you forgot to make in your interview.**

Sometimes after an interview, as you walk out to your car, you smack yourself on the forehead and say to yourself, "Why didn't I talk about ____?" Frustrating? You bet. But you can take care of the problem to some degree in your thank-you note. Again, perhaps in the second paragraph, you can say something to the effect of "After our discussion, it occurred to me that I forgot to tell you about _____."

5. **A thank-you note demonstrates your written communication skills.**

In receiving and reading your thank-you notes, your interviewer will see firsthand how you handle yourself on paper. You'll be using similar skills every day with the company's potential clients, customers and vendors -- so the interviewer will be reading carefully to see how you come across in print.

6. **Emailing a thank you.**

Emailing or calling to thank an employer is a great way to thank an employer as well. However, sending a thank you note gives them a concrete message of sincerity.

The following is a sample thank you letter sent to the interviewer(s) after the interview. This sample will serve as a guide when you write your thank you note.

Date

Interviewer's Name

Interviewer's Title

Company Name

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. Interviewer's Last Name:

It was pleasure interviewing with on (day/date) for the (name the position). I was impressed with the information you gave me during the interview about the position. I am excited about the potential of putting my skills and education to work at (name the company).

Recently, I completed my degree at North Dakota State College of Science; I believe my education has prepared me for this position. My degree in (list program) has given me competencies in (list skills or classes i.e.: accounting, hydraulics, psychology). In addition, my past work experience (list a position) enabled me to be customer focused, organized and goal oriented. My education and past work experience is a perfect match for your position.

Thank you for the interview and your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

How to handle money questions

It's important to choose your words very carefully when answering questions about money requirements to a prospective employer. Of course, we'd all like as much money as possible; unfortunately, this question makes most interviewers squeamish. Following the tips listed below will help you become more confident answering questions concerning money.

1. **Salary History.**- Suggested answer is "negotiable," when filling out expected salary on job applications. By leaving the answer blank, you run the risk of losing the job because you left it blank. But if you fill in the blank, you run the risk of selling yourself short. Salary is always negotiable, keep that in mind.
2. **What is your current salary?**- Be very careful answering this question. A great way to answer this question is, "My current position is not a very good comparison to this new position, therefore a comparison between the wages would not be very accurate. What I make is not as important as whether or not the skills I have are what you need, and I am confident the range will be fair." Not only are you being fair to the employer, but you reveal self-confidence.
3. **Employer should say a number first.**- Always find out what the salary range is before stating a number. You wouldn't want to underbid yourself. Someone else might be doing the exact same work as you are and getting paid much more. Wait for the employer to give a range; if the range is below what you want, say "I was thinking more like XYZ." Then be sure to list XYZ at least 10 to 20 percent higher than what you make already. Remember, every employer has a salary range already in mind before the interview began.
4. **What should I say if the employer won't give me a salary range and I am forced to give a number?**- Then you should state the range you are hoping to obtain from the prospective employer. Employers will typically look at the low end of your wage scale, so make sure you are comfortable with your low end. For example if you are making \$25,000, list \$32,000 - \$45,000 or so.
5. **Do your homework.**- Find out what other individuals in your field make for a living. Don't be afraid to contact professional organizations to get annual salary surveys. Read professional publications as well.
6. **Can you show us your pay stub?** If a prospective employer asks you to do this, you might not want this job. Reconsider a job in which you are intimidated in an interview. If you are intimidated in an interview, imagine what it will be like to work at this company. Respectful employers create a positive place to work. Keep this in mind.

What you should know about job offer negotiating

Good for you. The interview is over, both you and the hiring manager believe you are the correct person to fill the position, but now is the time to negotiate the terms of the agreement.

Negotiating is not something we do a lot in everyday tasks, so it is important to be prepared. The negotiations you will need to discuss typically included:

- Job design and functions
- Salary and bonus opportunities
- Work location and schedule
- Employment benefits and the perks of the job

Remember most job details are negotiable. As you reflect on the job offer, figure out how negotiable each component might be. An employer may be more flexible in specific areas of the company's core benefits as compared to other areas. Talk with your hiring manager and explain what is important to you and what you can be flexible with.

A good negotiator will create a "win-win" for both the employer and the employee. This can only be done with the negotiator can target the "wants" and "needs" of both the employer and the employee.

Remember:

- Job offers can be negotiated
- Discussion typically consists of job content, compensation, and benefits, time and location arrangements, and job-related perks
- As the job market continues to change, opportunities for negotiation increases

When/Why to write an acceptance/non-acceptance letter

Writing an acceptance letter is a professional and courteous way to inform the employer of your decision to accept a job. Not only is it respectful, but it clear and concrete.

Just as important to express your interest in accepting a job, it is just as imperative to inform an employer when you have decided not to accept a job offer. A non-acceptance letter shows you respect the employer and company at which you applied. It demonstrates professionalism and common courtesy.

The following two pages are examples of an acceptance letter and a non-acceptance letter.

Acceptance Letter Outline:

Heading:

Include your address, city, state, zip code, date, and employers name & address.

Content:

Confirm you are accepting the position and explain what the letter is for. Confirm details arranged in interview such as, location and salary. Demonstrate your appreciation and excitement to work for the prospective employer.

Closing:

A professional letter ends with sincerely, followed by four spaces and your name. It is customary to sign your name with black ink above your typed name.

Non-Acceptance Letter Outline:

Heading:

Include your address, city, state, zip code, date, and employers name & address.

Content:

Express your appreciation for the job offer given to you while being specific on the location. Be clear and concise and inform the employer of your decision. Express your decision reflects upon a better location that best suits you. Express your appreciation for the prospective employer's time and efforts.

Closing:

A professional letter ends with sincerely, followed by four spaces and your name. It is customary to sign your name with black ink above your typed name.

The following is a sample **acceptance** letter. This sample will serve as a guide if you need to write one.

4522 Wildcat Blvd.
Wahpeton, ND 58075

June 21, 2006

Mr. Stephen Moore
Personnel Director
NUCLEAR CHICAGO INCORPORATED
2000 Nuclear Drive
Des Plaines, IL 54023

Dear Mr. Moore:

This is to confirm receipt of your letter offering me a position at Nuclear Chicago at an annual salary of \$25,000.

I am very pleased to accept this offer and I am proud to have been selected.

It has been a real pleasure talking with you, and I will be waiting for further instructions to complete my employment procedure.

Sincerely,

Jane L. Doe

The following is a sample **non- acceptance** letter. This sample will serve as a guide if you need to write one.

354 Oceanfront Boulevard
Wahpeton, ND 58075

June 21, 2006

Mr. Matthew Roberts
Director of Personnel
LANGLEY BROTHERS INCORPORATED
843 Nellie Way
Rochester, NY 34564

Dear Mr. Roberts:

Thank you for the offer in the field of electronics at Langley Brothers Incorporated. I recently accepted a position in the Fargo area with a firm which best suited my needs at this time. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your time and consideration. I most certainly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Ms. Kay Belvedere

How to be successful in your new job

- Dress and groom for success. Dress at the level you hope to obtain a job position in. This will demonstrate you are prepared for a promotion. Even when co-workers see you when you are not at work, demonstrate professionalism.
- Early/Late. Get to work early and try to stay late. You can use this time to prepare. In the morning you can prepare for your day. In the evening you can prepare for the next day. Let your supervisor know you are willing to stay late to help meet deadlines. Be aware of overtime rules. Is your employer alright with overtime?
- Be energized. Be excited about your job and find ways to make it more enjoyable. Tell others what you like about your job. Find ways to learn more. Find volunteer opportunities within the business that will contribute your value at the company.
- Ask for more responsibility if you can take it on. Let the boss know you are interested in moving up. Do what you can to be involved in activities and fundraisers within the company to make yourself more valuable.
- Ask for training. Try to get as much training as possible. The more skills you obtain, the more valuable you are. Discover what training you need to do your job better.
- Learn on your own time. Read books or related business journals on your own time at home, rather than watching television. Keep up with what is new in your field, technology and communication strategies, etc.
- Do not be fearful of difficult projects. You will not receive much positive attention unless you do go above and beyond what is expected of you. Don't promise too much; keep your expectations high, but realistic.
- Get considerable results. Compare results from recent years to the current year. Be sure to keep track of your work and accomplishments. This can be used during your yearly evaluation to demonstrate your work performance.
- Never quit. If a job isn't working out for you, look into the possibility of working for another job with the same workplace. Or be more assertive in asking for what you need, for example, more responsibility or different assignments.

How to survive your new job

It's normal to be a bit nervous on your first day of work at a new job. Keep in mind, you are no longer going to class in comfy pants and the t-shirt you took a nap in around two o'clock. Now is the time to be professional and reflect upon the skills NDSCS has taught you for the past couple of years. The following tips will help you stay focused:

The top 11 reasons people get fired

1. Unable to get along with other co-workers (uncooperative)
2. Dishonesty (lying or stealing)
3. Poor hygiene (grooming or dress)
4. Not dependable (too many absences or late)
5. Personal business during work time
6. Unable to perform job duties
7. Too many errors – worked at a slow pace
8. Fails to follow supervisors orders, doesn't get along with supervisor
9. Alcohol/drug abuse
10. Misrepresented their skills/experience (lying)
11. Failing to follow safety rules (too many accidents)

Basic rules to follow on the job – Do's and Do Not's

- A “dead end job” does not exist. Learn all you can at your current position, it will help you gain a better position somewhere else. Even if it may not be your favorite job, be open-minded to the skills you can gain.
- Do not miss unnecessary days at work. A minor cold or child care is not a decent justification for missing work. Missing more than 3 days a year because of reasons such as this will draw negative attention to you. As a new employee, this is not good. Missing work for personal reasons, other than an illness, is deceitful.
- Be prompt. There are not very many acceptable reasons for being late. The majority of the time being late is your own fault. Remember: Make good decision and prepare for work the next day.
- Inform your employer if you will be late or absent. Even if you are going to be just a couple minutes late, you should call your supervisor and explain what happened. Leave a message only if you absolutely cannot reach your direct supervisor.
- Keep good hygiene. Be aware of what you look like at work. Make sure your clothes fit right and are clean.

- Seek out a “friend” to assist you. At most jobs, you will be assigned someone to show you around the office and your work. If you are not assigned someone, find someone to help you. Do your very best to be nice to this person and learn all you can from them about office procedures and your work.
- Read manuals. Most businesses have a manual of procedures and policies. This can range greatly from business to business, so be sure to read this carefully so you understand them. If the business is too small for a procedures manual ask the supervisor to explain them to you, if the supervisor hasn’t already done so.
- Steer clear of problem employees. There will be negative people/gossip in any workplace. If you spend time with a problem employee it reflects badly upon you, no matter how fun the employee may be. It’s okay to be social, but try to speak with these types of people only on a professional level.
- Don’t take personal time. You are paid to get a job done. Don’t spend too much time online, on the phone or on personal concerns. Socializing on the job can also be a concern. It’s alright to socialize to an extent, but you can easily overdo it. Try to avoid this and recognize how much time is too much.
- Children do not belong at work. Although you love your children very much, they do not belong at the workplace. Child care is not the concern of an employer. Phone calls to and from your children are strongly discouraged. When you interview for a job, tell the employer, child care has been arranged and you will not need to miss work for this reason – then make sure you don’t.
- Keep a good pace/error free. It is imperative you keep a quick and steady pace, but focus on keeping up without errors. It takes more time to correct mistakes than it does to be careful the first time. Keep a habit of using your breaks and lunch times for resting.

Time-Management

Time management is the key to success no matter what your occupation may be. From executive leaders, chef and homemakers, time-management is key. Consider the following tips when trying to reach the goals you've set out for yourself:

1. Make and keep a "to do" list- Keep your list updated at the beginning and end of each workday to make sure you have all the materials you need to bring home with you. (if necessary)
2. Be prepared- Carry a work briefcase or bag that contains work materials you can work on when you have free-time.
3. Do not waste time- If you finish a task fifteen minutes early before a meeting, use that time to get started on a new project or plan your route for a new task.
4. Take advantage of transit systems- Use the transit system to utilize time while traveling to meetings, seminars etc. It's a great way to get caught up on your reading.
5. Be efficient- Create a work pattern that prioritizes on the work that needs to be done now, rather than "doing too many things at once."
6. Pay attention & do it right the first time- Listen carefully to instructions and don't be afraid to repeat them back to your manager to make sure you understand each other.
7. Stay organized and keep up with the small tasks- Create a paper or electronic organization system to keep you focused on the tasks at hand. Keep up with small tasks like filing.
8. Consider technology tools to improve efficiency- Look for ways technology can increase your effectiveness at work, rather than distract you. Distractions can be technologies such as cell phones and beepers. Try not have these around as distractions unless necessary for your work.
9. Develop a follow up system- If you don't have your own personal contact manager, consider developing your own follow up system by getting an accordion folder numbered one through thirty-one. Follow up with the folder each morning to see if there is someone you were supposed to call or contact, a specific duty you were supposed to remember to do etc.
10. Be practical and careful with your time. Give yourself enough time between obligations and be ready to say no to activities beyond your priority list.

Importance of Communication

Communicating is not only an important aspect of your everyday routine with friends and family, but just as important in the work place. Daily activities, special projects and all other areas of work activities will run much smoother if good communication practices are used daily.

Here are a few guidelines to follow in consideration to communication in the work place:

1. Do not be defensive. Very few people enjoy criticism, but it is needed so we can learn from our mistakes. Just as praises are appreciated so we can learn from what we are doing correctly. If you ever find yourself feeling anger towards your supervisor, count to ten before responding.
2. Try to recognize what you did wrong. Don't be afraid to ask for an explanation of what you did wrong. Your boss or supervisor may be so upset you don't have the opportunity to understand what you did. By understanding what you did wrong, it can assist you in the process of fixing or alleviating the problem from occurring again in the future.
3. Say thank you. Learn to accept praises, just as we accept criticisms. Answering with a simple, "thank-you" is suffice.
4. Request feedback. If you are unsure about your work performance, ask. Let your supervisor know you want to do a good job.

In order to get the feedback you want, you must understand what your supervisor expects from you. Do these six things to get the positive feedback you are looking for.

1. Be honest. Your supervisor expects you to tell the truth at all times. If you make a mistake do not try to cover them up, instead tell the truth and find a way to fix your mistake. Lying is typically found out and can be grounds for dismissal.
2. Keep your breaks within the correct time frame. Do not take advantage of this 15 minute period by extending it. If you are not back in time, a co-worker may need to do your work and this reflects badly upon your work report.
3. Get to work. Balance your work between completing a task as quickly as possible and producing the highest quality of work you can. Don't be afraid to ask your supervisor for advice on how to you can meet these priorities.
4. Cooperate. Be flexible when your supervisor asks for your assistance. Be a team player and help out with tasks that are not typically assigned to you. Cooperation goes both ways. Usually a supervisor will remember your help when you request a day off.
5. Adapt. It's important to understand your company will change as the world around it changes. Learn to adapt to changes easily and quickly.
6. Take initiative. Once you are finished with your work, look for other ways to help out.

Quick tips for conflict situations

Do not accuse others. If you make a mistake, fix it. It's not responsible to blame co-workers or your supervisor for your errors.

Express how you feel. Don't ever start a sentence with "you." Use "I" statements such as, "I feel," "I think," or "I am" to describe your view.

Ask for advice. Make sure you understand the situation completely. Ask for clarification if you aren't sure about something. Ask your supervisor if you responded correctly and have acted appropriately. It is possible to misunderstand what happened.

Define what you want. In order for your supervisor to help give you what you need/want out of a conflict, you must tell them what you want. You should know what it is you want done about a situation before going in to talk to them about it. State your wishes clearly and respectfully.

Get assurance. After you have justified how you feel and what you want done, find out what your supervisor can do about the condition.

When needed, compromise. You can't always get your way, perhaps you might not have considered your supervisors needs or the needs of the organization. Be sure to be open to compromise.

Adapt to change

Change is inevitable, so learn to adapt to it. It's common for your personal life and career to change at the same time. It's normal for one area to affect the other, learn to separate your personal life from your work.

Change can be overwhelming and exciting and give us opportunities we never dreamt of. Don't let change get the best of you.

On a personal level, learn to handle emotions and expand your comfort zone. Welcome change, develop a financial plan, set goals, and manage stress.

Plan & prioritize to reduce stress

Take care of daily routine through realistic planning to reduce daily stress. Of course, major life events stress cannot be prevented, but the daily stresses can be overcome with good planning.

Planning lets you spend more time on what's most important and lets you see the big picture. Consider these 5 steps to a well-planned life.

1. Consider what your principles are. What are principles? Principles are your personal ideals. Your principles guide your behavior and apply to all your circumstances and actions.
2. Set priorities. Most people are far too busy to ever achieve all the things they want to do. Priorities help us accomplish the things most important to us.
3. Keep a log of your time. You can learn where your time is being spent and what the most effective way to spend your time is. This is a great way to determine how well your activities reflect your priorities.
4. Discover your goals and objectives. Determine how much time you can devote to each priority, and then set your goal to obtain it. Be sure your goals are challenging, but realistic. If you know you absolutely can not do something, do not make it a goal for yourself.
5. Consider your actions. What needs to be done in order for you to reach your goals. Factors to consider are time, money and material resources.

Be happy and successful

Success is not a matter of luck; it's learning the right skills and attitudes. Success is learning from your mistakes, rebounding from setbacks, and developing patience and persistence in the face of challenges and obstacles.

Being successful is not enough, if you're not happy. Your success should be a reflection of your values. Set and achieve goals that are consistent with your needs, interests, personality, and values. This could mean changing jobs or careers. It can mean changing yourself. The following is a list of tips on loving what you do.

1. Choose the line of work you love
2. Commit to competence
3. Invest in training
4. Plan a course of achievement
5. Set goals
6. Nurture a problem-solving mindset
7. Build and cultivate support systems
8. Monitor your progress
9. Re-map your course when needed to take advantage of new experiences and learning
10. Continue to set new goals – and keep going