

St. Cloud Technical & Community College

CAREER CENTER



A member of Minnesota State

Resumes

Cover Letters

Interviews

Guidelines, Tips, and Examples

A green rectangular sign with a white border, tilted slightly to the right. The sign contains the text "YOUR CAREER NEXT EXIT" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The sign is mounted on a post against a blue background.

**YOUR CAREER
NEXT EXIT**

RESUMES

Definition: A brief account of one's experience and qualifications for the purpose of securing an interview for employment.

RESUME ESSENTIALS

Focus

The resume must be able to stand alone without a cover letter.

The reader must be able to immediately recognize the purpose of the resume.

Qualifications that match the job

Identify skills, core attributes, experiences, etc., that show your value to the reader - tell the employer what you can do for them.

Action Verb + Skill + Task = Results

Use this formula for writing bulleted phrases that define your work experience.

Balance

Document must look aesthetically appealing

1-2 pages, only if second page is full

Font size: 10-12 pt.

Font style: Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri

Must be scanned in 15 seconds or less

Avoid using templates such as Microsoft Word - they are difficult to edit

References on a separate page

Error-free Copy - No Exceptions.

DEVELOPING STRONG BULLET POINTS

Map it out

Do not think about a job or experience based solely on what you did, but also what you gained and learned.

Employers will be evaluating you based on what you can do for his/her company, your past experiences are meant to determine whether or not your contribution will be positive.

Select the skills you have that will be the most meaningful for the job you are investigating. Do not get trapped into simply explaining your qualifications by what you did for your past employer.

JOB: RESTAURANT SERVER

TASK

Take orders

SKILL

Communication

EXAMPLE

Used strong communication skills when describing menu items to customers

TASK

Put food orders in

SKILL

Attention to detail

EXAMPLE

Demonstrated accuracy while ensuring orders were entered correctly

TASK

Deliver food to table

SKILL

Multitasking

EXAMPLE

Showed ability to successfully multitask by delivering food in a timely manner

TASK

Take payment

SKILL

Integrity

EXAMPLE

Demonstrate integrity while handling cash and credit card transactions

Resume Tips

Focus on relevant skills and experience, as well as transferable skills.

Tailor each resume for the position you are applying for and match language used in a position description.

Less is more - avoid using lots of bold, underlined words and/or fancy fonts.

Use white space to indicate when each topic ends.

Create margins between .5" narrow and 1" wide.

Be concise.

Use PDF format when uploading or emailing documents to employers.

Follow the application instructions.

Remember your social media or online digital presence is part of your resume: many employers check Facebook and other social media sites.

Course Work

If you have taken a class or classes that help you meet minimum employment qualifications that can't be met otherwise, list those classes on your resume.

Class Projects

Only include class projects that help satisfy minimum employment qualifications for an internship for full-time job. Be selective.

High School Activities and Honors

After freshman year in college, high school activities and honors are no longer relevant.

Be honest.

ACTION VERBS AND ADVERBS

| <u>Action verbs</u> | | | | | | <u>Adverbs</u> |
|---------------------|-------------|------------|------------|----------|------------|----------------|
| Accomplish | Coordinate | Develop | Generate | Maintain | Produce | Accurately |
| Achieve | Communicate | Display | Hone | Manage | Provide | Creatively |
| Administer | Construct | Document | Illustrate | Master | Select | Effectively |
| Apply | Contribute | Enhance | Implement | Operate | Supervisor | Efficiently |
| Assist | Create | Execute | Initiate | Optimize | Utilize | Successfully |
| Attain | Delegate | Facilitate | Improve | Organize | Upgrade | |
| Calculate | Demonstrate | Formulate | Lead | Perform | Work | |
| | Design | Gain | Leverage | Present | Write | |

Note: Make sure when using action verbs in your bullet points you are using the correct verb tense.

TOP 10 ATTRIBUTES EMPLOYERS WANT TO SEE ON A RESUME

1. Leadership
2. Ability to work in a team
3. Communication skills (written)
4. Problem-solving skills
5. Communication skills (verbal)
6. Strong work ethic
7. Initiative
8. Analytical/quantitative skills
9. Flexibility/adaptability
10. Technical skills

Source: NACE Job Outlook 2016

RESUME EXAMPLE

Cathy C. Cyclone

Current Address City, State Zip 320-308-1234 email address

OBJECTIVE

To obtain the summer Marketing Internship with the XYZ Company

EDUCATION

St Cloud Technical and Community College, St Cloud, MN
Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing, Minor; English
GPA : 3.3/4.0, Dean's List (two semesters)

Anticipated Graduation May 20XX

RELATED COUREWORK

Foundations of Marketing

Marketing Strategy

Consumer Behavior

INTERNSHIP

Marketing Professionals, Minneapolis MN

Marketing Intern

Highlight an internship skill separately to illustrate its importance and relevance

List three to five bullet points following the format: Action Verb + Skill + Task= Result (*Result is optional)

Managed all social media accounts, including development of content and marketing plan

WORK EXPERIENCE

SCTCC Bookstore, St Cloud MN

August 20XX- May 20XX

Shift Supervisor

January 20XX- May 20XX

Promoted to Shift Supervisor after six months of employment for demonstrating strong leadership and a commitment to customer service

Demonstrated attention to detail and integrity by ensuring accurate cash count and daily register balances

Cashier

August 20XX- January 20XX

Listened and provided excellent service to diverse customers, resulting in higher customer satisfaction

Worked individually, as well as part of a team, to meet the goals established by the management

Target, St Cloud MN

Merchandiser

May 20XX-Present

Used strong business acumen to increase top line sales by merchandising top sellers and writing orders to support stock levels

Collaborated with cross functional team members to develop individual action plans for each store to meet stated business deliverables

Executed merchandising and floor moves based on seasonal changes, business needs, and trends

LEADERSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT

Student Senate, SCTCC, St Cloud MN

August 20XX- Present

Student Representative

Actively involved in the College Affairs, Student Affairs, or Internal Affairs Committee

Gain knowledge of personal leadership by work in the Student Senate office

COMPUTER SKLLS

Microsoft Word

Microsoft Excel

NURSING RESUME SECTION EXAMPLES

Licensure and Certification

Certified Nursing Assistant

Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers

- American Heart Association

Clinical Nursing Experience

Medical/Surgical Rotation, CentraCare, St Cloud MN 84 hours

Palliative Care Observation, St Cloud Hospital St Cloud MN, 8 hours

CHILD & ADULT CARE INTERNSHIP EXAMPLE

Student Teaching Experience

North Jr High School, St Cloud MN

Student Teacher, seventh grade

- Utilize creativity to develop curriculum and teach a diverse class of 20 students
- Displayed strong organizational skills to complete lesson plans
- Incorporated successful classroom management using xyz theory of behavior management

MANUFACTURING CONSTRUCTION PROJECT EXAMPLE

Manufacturing Project

Senior Capstone, SCTCC

Spring 20XX

Reverse Manufacturing a Model Combat Tank

- Applied conceptual modeling and manufacturing skills while developing 3D models and blueprints for over 50 individual and interworking parts of a model combat tank
- Utilized technology and CAD software including PTC Creo and digital calipers to complete modeling
- Developed project management skills by serving as team leader, developing and adhering to an overall work plan and delegating assignments to team members
- Displayed strong communication skills when presenting project process and results to professor and classmates

OTHER ACADEMIC PROJECT EXAMPLE

Academic Project

Experiential Retailing, SCTCC

Fall 20XX

Fashion Merchandising Secondary Brand Proposal

- Incorporated marketing, brand management and style concept theories to design a secondary brand proposal for a major retailer
- Utilized design and art skills while creating concept drawings of possible pieces, including eight original designs
- Created store layout concept, including all visual merchandising and product placement to optimize sales of secondary brand while adhering to established brand concepts
- Gained knowledge of budgeting by developing a financial plan for secondary brand launch

COMPUTER AND TECHNICAL SKILLS EXAMPLE

Computer Skills

Operating System: Windows 7/XP, Unix, Linux

Programming Languages: C# 3.5/4.0, C++, Object Oriented Programming

Web Technologies: ASP.NET, Java Script, CSS, HTML

Databases: SQL SERVER 2008, SQL SERVER 2008 R2, Oracle 9i

Software: Microsoft Access, Excel, Word, PowerPoint

OPTIONAL RESUME SECTIONS

Resume sections should be relevant and tailored to the position you are applying for. For example, if you are applying for a teaching position, use **teaching experience** or **related experience** instead of work experience. This allows you to set the tone and focus of the resume and make it clear what relevant and related experiences you have.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Academic Achievements | Computer Languages | Licenses | Related Experience |
| Academic History | Computer Skills | Memberships | Related Field Work |
| Accomplishments | Cooperative Education | Military Experience | Research Experience |
| Activities | Dissertations | Military Service | Seminars |
| Associations | Education | Military Training | Skills and Attributes |
| Athletic Involvement | Educational Background | Objective | Special Awards/Recognitions |
| Employment History | Occupational History | Strengths | Awards and Distinctions |
| Exhibitions and Awards | Other Skills | Student Teaching | Background and Interests |
| Extracurricular Involvement | Overseas Experience | Teaching Experience | Career Goal/Graduate School |
| Practicum Experience | Thesis | Career Highlights | Honors and Organizations |
| Professional Affiliations | Volunteer experience | Career Related Training | Internship Experience |
| Professional Experiences | Work Experience | Career Skills and Experience | Job History |
| Professional Objectives | Work History | Certifications | Languages |
| Published Works | Class Projects | Leadership Roles | Qualifications |
| Coaching Experience | Related Course Work | | |

COVER LETTERS

Definition: A professional letter introducing another document. A letter of application summarizes qualifications for employment and introduces a resume.

COVER LETTER ESSENTIALS

Focus

Well-written, professional document created for a specific company and addressed to a specific person/department/company.

Balance

Documents must look good on a page.

One page - font size: 10-12 pt.

Font style: Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri

Address position requirements or minimum qualification

Identify skills, core attributes, experiences, etc., that show your value to the reader - what you can do for the employer.

Strong Closing

Express an interest in participating in an interview to discuss your qualifications in greater detail.

Error-free Copy - No Exceptions.

COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

Use the same heading as your resume or:

Street Address

City, State Zip

Month, Day, Year

Name of Recruiter

Title of Recruiter

Employer's Name

Employer's Street Address

City, State Zip

Salutation

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. (recruiter's last name followed with a colon):

Opening Paragraph

- Identify the position for which you are applying, how you learned of the opening and/or the intent of your letter.
- If you are not targeting a specific position, but have an interest in the company and its mission, then include that in this paragraph.
- Use a transitional sentence to introduce the second paragraph.

Middle Paragraph (qualifications)

- Identify two or three ways you could successfully contribute to the overall functioning or growth of the company.
- Mention why you are excited about the position and the organization.
- Explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position.
- If you have some practical experience, point out specific achievements or unique qualifications that evolved from it.
- Illustrate relevant knowledge and qualifications by providing at least one example of a time you used the specific knowledge or skill.
- Include a summary statement about your interest in the company and your ability to transfer your academic knowledge/work experience into a professional position.

Closing Paragraph (wrap-up/action)

- Express an interest in participating in an interview to discuss your qualifications in greater detail.
- Provide your contact information.
- If applicable, make a statement that will encourage a response. For example, you can say you will be in town on a certain date and would like to schedule an appointment or you will call on a certain date.
- Thank the person for his/her time and consideration.

Complimentary Closer

- Examples may include: Sincerely or Respectfully (always followed by a comma)
- Your name would appear typed four spaces below the complimentary close, and your signature would appear between these two items.
- Note: The word "enclosure(s)" should appear beneath your name if you are sending any additional information (resume, etc.)

COVER LETTER EXAMPLE

Cathy C. Cyclone

Current Address City, State Zip 320-308-1234 email address

March 14, 20XX

Ms. Carolyn Johnson
Human Resource Director
Employer name
1234 Street NW
City, State Zip

Dear Ms. Johnson:

I am applying for the position of Project Engineer advertised in The Forum on Sunday, March 13. The skills I developed during my Cooperative Education assignment and throughout my academic work give me confidence in my qualifications for this position.

I will earn a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering upon graduation this May from St Cloud Technical and Community College. My course work has given me a broad spectrum of technical theory and applications. For the past two summers, I have worked as an Electrical Engineering Intern for (insert company name) in Alexandria, Minnesota. My work included designing and installing equipment to improve electrical generation efficiency and plant safety. Consulting with engineers and technicians when developing designs and modifications allowed me to learn new techniques, test new theories and improve my presentation skills.

The skills that I developed working as an intern give me confidence in my abilities to meet and exceed your expectations. Enclosed is a copy of my resume for your consideration, and I look forward to an opportunity to discuss them with you in person. Please contact me at 701-555-1212 or first.last@sctcc.edu to schedule an interview.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Typed name

Enclosure

Alternate formatting note: When addressing job qualifications in a cover letter, you can use a bulleted list in place of the “middle paragraph.” However, if you choose to use a bulleted list, be sure your punctuation is correct. If you have questions about format, please contact the Career Center, and we will be happy to assist you.

INTERVIEWS

Definition: A professional meeting to evaluate the qualifications of a prospective employee.

INTERVIEW ESSENTIALS

Be professional

Dress appropriately and arrive 10-15 minutes early.

Remember the interview starts the moment you arrive.

Come prepared with extra resumes and questions to ask the employer.

Research the Company

Take the time to research the company before your interview. Also, be able to tell the recruiter why you want the particular job or how you fit the job description.

Use the star method

Use specific examples when responding, using Situation/Task, Action, Result

Make eye contact

Establish eye contact with each member of the interview panel.

Be sure to follow-up

Send a thank-you note to every member of the interview within 24 hours.

BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEW

Behavior-based interviewing is the most popular format among HR professionals. This style of interview focuses on past behavior to determine how an applicant will respond to similar situations in the future. Most questions are designed to elicit specific responses and detailed descriptions. Behavior-based interview questions will challenge the applicant to recall in detail what they did and how they felt. By doing this, the interviewer is able to see the big picture – the applicant’s thought process, decision-making abilities, communication skills and the results he or she achieved.

Applicants should answer behavior-based interview questions using the following format: Situation/Task; Action; Result (STAR)

Situation/Task

- Describe the situation you were in or the task you needed to accomplish. (Describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past.)
- Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to fully understand the situation/task.

Action

- Keep the focus on you even if you are discussing a group project or effort.
- Describe what your role was – not the efforts of the team.
- Don’t tell what you might do; tell what you did.

Result

- Finish your answer by telling the interviewer what happened, how the event ended and/or what you accomplished.

SUCCESSFUL PHONE INTERVIEWING

- Treat the phone interview with as much preparation as you would an on-site interview.
- Stand and look into a mirror when answering their questions – this will remind you to smile.
- Ensure you are in a private location and will not be interrupted or disturbed.
- Have important documents (resume, portfolio), a note pad and several pens/pencils nearby.
- Dress up – it may be easier for you to think and sound more professional if you are dressed professionally.
- Keep the pace of your speech slow, as rapid speech is magnified over the phone.
- Be sure to enunciate your words very carefully.
- Do not use a cell phone, unless necessary.
- Record the names of each interviewer for a thank-you letter.
- Thank the interviewers. Let them know they can contact you with further questions.
- Make sure your outgoing voicemail message is professional.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Common interview Q and A: Always finish your answer with the result/outcome.

Tell me about yourself.

- Almost always the first question an interviewer will ask.
- Companies are not looking for family history, hometown or hobbies.
- Keep your response related to the job you are applying for.
- Discuss education, work experience and skills, but do not ramble.

Tell me about a difficult decision you have made.

- Employers are looking for the process you used to make a decision.

Describe a time when you worked as part of a team.

- Draw on examples from past work experiences, class projects or athletics.
- Emphasize your role and how you contributed to the team.

Do you have any questions for me?

- Always have five questions prepared; ask three.
- Ensure they are not questions you can find the answers to on your own.
- Have questions written in a pad-folio notebook, and refer to that during your interview when appropriate.
- Never initiate questions about salary, vacation, break time or benefits during a first/screening interview.

Questions you can ask:

- How would you describe a typical day on the job?
- How will this position be evaluated?
- What do you enjoy about working at XYZ company? (Gives insight into company culture)
- When are you planning to make your decision? (Always ask.)

ADDITIONAL SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
- When working within a group, what role do you typically take?
- Why do you want to work here?
- Assuming all candidates are similar on paper, why should we hire you?
- What experience do you have working with a diverse group of people?
- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get a job done.
- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split-second decision.
- Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
- Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish something and failed.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.

EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS OF YOUR JOB SEARCH

- Present yourself well in writing on resumes, cover letters and thank-you notes/letters.
- Articulate your career goals.
- Define your motivation.
- Display maturity – good manners.
- Take seriously your transition from student to professional.
- Know your uniqueness, strengths and areas for improvement.
- Understand what talents you have to offer an employer.
- Present yourself well verbally.
- Project a professional image.

REFERENCES

References should be people who can critique your performance in past employment, education or community activities, such as supervisors, professors, volunteer coordinators, advisers or coaches. Unless specified, three to five contacts are typical for a reference sheet.

TIPS:

- References should be professional or academic references – do not use parents or close personal friends.
- Ask for permission before using someone as a reference; ask them what they might say to a potential employer about you.
- Submit references to employers only when they are requested.
- Let your references know you are in a job search so they can be prepared if they are contacted.

REFERENCES EXAMPLE

Cathy C. Cyclone

Current Address City, State Zip 320-308-1234 email address

REFERENCES

Dr. John Scott

Adviser/Professor

Communication Department

St Cloud Technical and Community College

1540 Northway Drive

City, State Zip

701.231.0000

john.scott@emailaddress.edu

Jane Reynolds

Owner

ABC, Inc.

1111 Some Street

City, State Zip

701.555.2222

jane.reynolds@abc.com

Alice Haney

Executive Director

Helping Homes, Inc.

3433 ABC Street South City, State Zip 701.555.1111

alice.haney@helpinghomes.com

LINKEDIN

Definition: LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.

LINKEDIN ESSENTIALS

Complete your profile

Create a strong, professional summary. List qualifications and goals concisely and confidently, and complete the sections specific to college students, including: majors, minors, courses, projects, honors, awards, and GP.

Describe experiences (can be Action Verb + Skill + Task + Result), including keywords and accomplishments.

Incorporate related/industry keywords and phrases throughout profile (everything is searchable.).

Be strategic with your section layouts - put relevant information high on your profile.

Watch for spelling or grammatical errors.

Claim your unique URL

When you create an account, LinkedIn creates a generic, random link to your profile page; follow the editing process to make your profile URL unique to you.

Participate in groups

Update your profile regularly as it relate to desired work.

Collect recommendations from professionals you have worked with - the best profiles show diverse recommendations.

Research and join college-affiliated and industry-related groups.

Use the alumni tool

Gain insight into a career path and network with SCTCC alumni with similar majors and skills.

Actively update your profile

Remember, you are responsible for what you put on there for people to see.

*For more information, visit
<http://students.linkedin.com>*

DRESS TO IMPRESS

It only takes about 3-5 seconds to make a great first impression. Your apparel, demeanor, and mannerisms are all factors in influencing what someone else thinks of you.

This is why it is so important to take time and effort in planning what you wear to a job interview, career fair, or networking event.

BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

- Job Interview
- Career Fair
- Networking
- Professional Events

Statistics show that when meeting new people, the impact is:

- 7% from what we actually say
- 38% from the quality of our voice, grammar, and overall confidence
- 55% from the way we dress, act, and walk through the door

Women

- Solid color, conservative suit
- Coordinator blouse
- Modest shoe
- Limited jewelry
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Tan or light hosiery
- Conservative make-up and no perfume
- Manicured nails
- Small purse and/or padfolio



** 70% of employers claim they don't want applicants to be fashionable or trendy.*

Men

- Solid, conservative suit
- White long-sleeve shirt
- Conservative tie
- Belt matching shoe color
- Dark socks and professional shoes
- Very limited jewelry
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- No aftershave
- Neatly trimmed nails
- Padfolio or briefcase



** 65% of bosses say that dress could be the deciding factor between two similar candidates.*

BUSINESS CASUAL

- Employer Presentations

Women

- Khaki or dress pants
- Nice top (nothing sleeveless)
- Modest shoes
- Limited jewelry
- Conservative make-up and no perfume
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Manicured nails

Men

- Khaki or dress pants
- Button-up dress shirt
- Belt matching shoe color
- Dark socks and professional shoes
- Conservative tie (optional)
- Very limited jewelry
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- No aftershave
- Neatly trimmed nails



WHAT NOT TO WEAR

- Wrinkled clothes
- Bare legs/no hosiery
- Clothes with holes or dirty spots
- Cleavage
- White gym socks
- Hats
- Stiletto/platform heels
- Short shorts/skirts
- NO GUM!
- Fishnet stockings
- Tennis shoes or flip-flops
- Sweatpants or leggings

ST. CLOUD 
TECHNICAL & COMMUNITY
COLLEGE
Career Services



MINNESOTA STATE

St. Cloud Technical & Community College,
A member of Minnesota State

*SCTCC is a member of Minnesota State and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. ADA accessible facility.
Affirmative action/equal opportunity educator/employer.*

320-308-5486

lisa.mohr@sctcc.edu

Northway 1-448