



Swami Vivekananda
Contributor Personality Program



An Adani Group Initiative

UNIT 13:

Resume Building



for students and faculty of
Gujarat Technological University

by

i-become [®] University
Services

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UNIT 13:

Resume Building

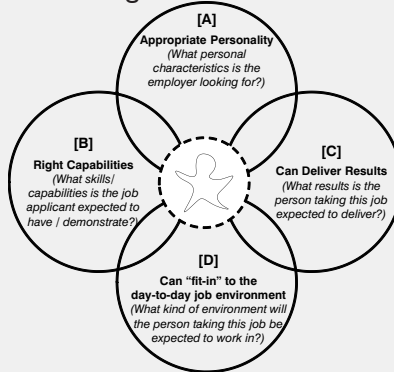
Learn to develop a resume for the job-market. Learn how to develop both a generic resume and resumes specific to some types of jobs. Also learn the best practices and common errors in developing resumes.

Most importantly, learn to analyze the jobs offered and present yourself in terms of your potential / willingness to contribute to the job.

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13.1 What is the Employer looking for?

When Employers offer jobs, they look for 4 key aspects in an applicant. Thus, as a Contributor, when you are thinking of applying for a job, look out for what the Employer is looking for under each of these 4 categories.



PRACTICE EXERCISE 1: Study this job advertisement in a newspaper

Data Collection Supervisor

Responsibilities include supervising and training telephone interviewing staff, briefing, editing, and monitoring production rates for both on-line and focus group recruiting studies. This position requires a minimum of one year supervisory or management experience. Market research or phone room experience is a plus. Individual must be able to recognise potential project and personnel problems and give suggestions on how to improve them.

Must be able to manage staff through constructive feedback, discipline and training. This position requires strong interpersonal communication skills, a take-charge attitude, strong organisational skills and the ability to manage multiple projects. This is an evening and weekend position, which averages 35 hours per week. Compensation depends on experience. Benefits include: medical /dental /vision, paid holidays & vacation time.

Summary of what we are looking for:

- Excellent communications skills - both verbal and written
- Strong leadership skills with a managerial background
- Proactive problem solver
- Able to manage people under stress from a fast paced and ever changing environment
- Very organised
- Enthusiastic motivator of interviewing staff
- Can oversee and interact daily with a large staff of interviewers
- Good computer skills, i.e. MS Office products such as Word, Excel and Access
- Self-motivated and self-starter

If you enjoy managing people and excel under pressure in a fast paced and rewarding environment, then you are the candidate for us.

continued ...

WHAT ARE THE EMPLOYER’S EXPECTATIONS:

[A] What personal characteristics is the employer looking for?

Discuss this job advertisement in groups and write down “what qualities is this employer looking for in a person, when they say each of the following...” –

We are looking for a person who -

- Is a proactive problem solver

- Is self-motivated and is a self-starter

- Has a take-charge attitude

[B] What skills/capabilities is the job applicant expected to have / demonstrate?

Discuss this job advertisement in groups and write down - (a) What will doing each of the following in this job involve? (b) Have you demonstrated any of these skills / capabilities before? If yes, where? *[HINT: You may have organized a college or family event where you needed to use organizational skills]*

We are looking for a person who -

- Recognizes potential project and personnel problems and suggests improvements

- Can manage staff through constructive feedback, discipline, and training

- Has strong organizational skills, leadership skills, and communication skills

- Is an enthusiastic motivator of staff

continued ...

...continued

[C] What results is the person taking this job expected to deliver?

Discuss this job advertisement in groups and based on what is said below, write down what are the key results the employer expects you to deliver and what this would imply for you –

We are looking for a person who –

- Will supervise and train telephone interviewing staff.

- Will monitor production rates for both online and focus group recruiting studies.

- Will oversee and interact daily with a large staff of interviewers.

[D] What kind of environment will the person taking this job be expected to work in?

Discuss this job advertisement in groups and write down what kind of job environment and life-style each of the following would mean for you if you took up this job –

- “This is an evening and weekend position, averaging 35 hours per week”.

- “You need manage people under stress from a fast paced and ever changing environment”; “Do you excel under pressure in a fast paced and rewarding environment”.

PROJECT 1: Short-list jobs to apply for

In Project Teams of 3-5 students each –

STEP 1: Identify 8-10 jobs you would be interested in applying to, and study each job's profile.

(Look for the job descriptions in newspaper advertisements, job profiles on websites, job posts on job sites on the internet)

[Do STEP 1 at home and bring to class for discussion]

STEP 2: For each job profile, discuss with your project team to write down what the employer is looking for, in terms of –

- [A] What personal characteristics is the employer looking for?
- [B] What skills/capabilities is the job applicant expected to have / demonstrate?
- [C] What results is the person taking this job expected to deliver?
- [D] What kind of environment will the person taking this job be expected to work in?

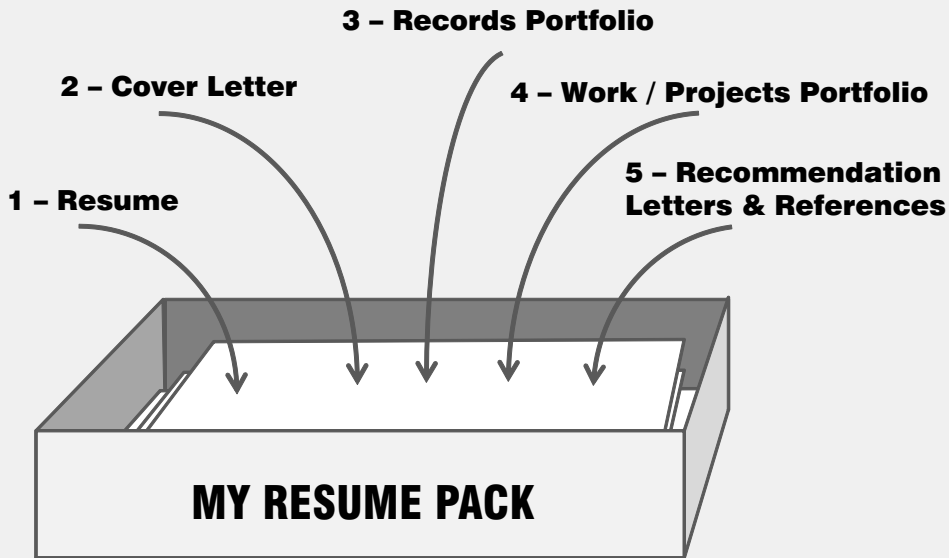
STEP 3: In light of this, individually put down for each job profile –

- Do these personal characteristics match with your personality?
- Have you either been formally trained for these required skills/capabilities or have you demonstrated these in any other situation, if yes where? (Eg: you may have organized a college or family event where you needed to use organizational skills)
- How can you demonstrate that you have the capacity to deliver these expected results?
- Is this kind of job environment, location, and life-style requirements suitable to you?

STEP 4: In light of this, shortlist the jobs that you will be right for.

13.2 Assemble your Resume Pack

Your Resume Pack will need to contain the following components. In this Unit, we will learn to build each of these components step by step.



PRACTICE EXERCISE 2:

Explore the communication purpose of each of the 5 components of your Resume Pack

- For each component, discuss in small groups and write down -
 - What is the purpose of this component in my overall communication to the employer?
 - What should it tell the employer about me?
 - Do an open class discussion to share the 'communication purpose' of each component

1 - Resume

2 - Cover Letter

(specific to the job you are applying for)

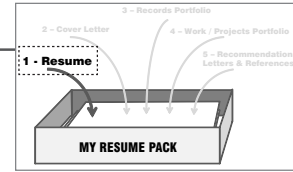
3 - Records Portfolio

(eg: mark-lists, certificates, etc.)

4 - Work / Projects Portfolio

5 - Recommendation Letters & References

13.3 Build your Resume



Build your Resume step by step.

Level 3 Resume: CONTRIBUTOR PROFILE

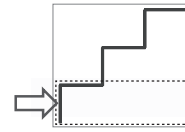
Communicate how you can contribute in the work place

Level 2 Resume: QUALITY

Communicate "quality" through your resume

Level 1 Resume: FACTS

Describe all your information and facts



Level 1 Resume: FACTS

At the first level, you need to **assemble all your facts or basic information** about yourself. This will be a description of your academic track record, details on courses taken, work experience, etc.

PRACTICE EXERCISE 3:

Study all 10 categories in Geeta’s resume. In light of this, discuss in groups what kind of information you would need to put into your own resume.

Observe the different parts of her resume -

- ① Name
- ② Address
- ③ Telephone no.
- ④ Email address (if any)
- ⑤ Date of birth
- ⑥ Educational Profile (your academic track record, including – qualifications, marks, institutions you have been to)
- ⑦ Special achievements (to draw the evaluator’s attention to areas where you have excelled)
- ⑧ Co-curricular and Extra-curricular Activities (to communicate that you have a wider range of capabilities and talents beyond just academics)
- ⑨ Areas of interest (areas where you want to learn and develop in, where you would like to work / study further if given a choice)
- ⑩ Skills and hobbies (talking only about those skills and hobbies that demonstrate capabilities relevant to the job applied for)

① to ⑤

Geeta K. Mishra		
D-181, Indira Nagar, Barielly 226016, Tel: 382841 ; Email: gmish@vsnl.com		
Date of Birth: 26th September 1978		

Value Profile

- Can take initiative, work under pressure and balance multi-task assignments. (E.g. balancing curricular and extra-curricular activities)
- Can be a good team member, especially in situations where tough and high stress goals have to be achieved (E.g. Mountain climbing)
- Have the tenacity to patiently work through an area, for achieving results (E.g. Practicing music)

⑥

Educational Profile
Have displayed a consistent track record throughout my academic life

Year	Degree & University	Marks
1995 - 98	B.A. with English, Psychology and Economics, I.T. College, Lucknow University, Lucknow	61%
1993 - 95	I.A. with Psychology, History, Geography, Loretto Girls School, U.P. Board, Lucknow	65%
1992 - 93	I.C.S.E.; St. Anthony's High School, Barielly	74%

⑦

Distinctions and Achievements
Have displayed the ability to balance academics with extra & co-curricular activities

Year	Awards
1994	Best all rounder of the year
1997	Marget W. Scholarship for good academic performance

⑧

Co-curricular and Extra Curricular Activities
Have actively sought career and professional enhancement courses in keeping with current environmental needs

Year	Experience
1998 - 99	Diploma in DTP and Computer graphics. Jetking Software, Malad (W), Mumbai
Nov-Dec 1998	Two months of 'on the job training' in an ad agency, XYZ, Mumbai
Apr-Jun 1999	Project on CAD, as a part of curriculum at Jetking

⑨

Area of Interest

Interest to work in project management and co-ordination
--

⑩

Skills and Hobbies

1. FORMAL TRAINING IN CARNATIC MUSIC: Have trained since the age of six. I devote 4 hours per week to this
2. TREKKING: Includes regular weekend treks to small and big peaks in the Vindhyas. Have climbed up to Gangotri in 2001 summer.
3. WATCHING PLAYS: Enjoy varied performances and dance-drama styles of theatre.
4. TRAVELLING: Have hitch hiked, gone on cruises, and holidays to various tourist, religious and remote areas in India.

PROJECT 2: Build a Level 1 Resume for yourself

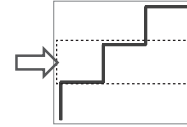
Complete this at home and bring to class for further discussions –

STEP 1: Learning from Geeta's resume, write out a draft of your own resume, presenting all the information about yourself covering all the 10 categories shown in her resume.

STEP 2: In addition, also add a section on your "Experience Profile" (if any).

- In this, talk of any projects you may have done in college or outside. In your description, clearly and briefly mention (i) project goals (ii) your specific role and what you did in the project team (iii) project outputs delivered.
- If you have prior work experience, talk about this. In your description, clearly and briefly mention (i) organizations / institutions you worked with, with basic details on what they do; give a web-link if possible (ii) your period of work (iii) role you were working in (iv) major contributions you made during your period there. Be brief and specific – talk about the major results you delivered NOT long lists of activities you did.

[HINT: For example, SAY - Responsible for scheduling and guest management for an entertainment event attended by over 2000 people DON'T SAY - Picked up and dropped guests, organized seats for them, etc.]



Level 2 Resume: Quality

At the second level, you need to **communicate high quality** work through every action related to your resume. This means taking care of the language you use, structuring the resume carefully making it easy to read for the employer, ensuring the “look and feel” and presentation of your resume is good, packaging the resume so that it stands out and the employer *feels like* giving you a call.

Recruiters are receiving more resumes than ever these days and don’t have a lot of time to review them. A quick glance at the editing, structure and organization of your resume helps them form a quick impression of what kind of worker and communicator you may be. Thus, it is important to **make a good ‘first impression’** through your resume.

PRACTICE EXERCISE 4: Five presentation goals have been given here. Brainstorm in small groups to discuss best practices for each and come out with more ideas. Then do an open class discussion on each presentation goal, to share ideas with the class.

How to create a good first impression – 1

SOME BEST PRACTICE IDEAS

Choose your **design and format** carefully. Except in very creative professions, colors (of the paper and the text) should be **sober**. Black and white is safe.

You should be **available when they try to get in touch**.

State your contact details clearly, including a postal address; email id that you check regularly; working phone number (preferably a mobile number, if any).

Use a **professional sounding e-mail id** (eg: avoid e-mail id like coolgirl@gmail.com). Create a new email id if needed.

Presentation Goal 1:
My resume looks and sounds “professional”

Use **simple fonts that are crisp and, professional-looking**. Don’t use more than 3 font variations (including style, size, etc.) in the document. One font variation for title (your name etc.); one for sub-headings (eg: educational profile, title); one for highlighting key words to stand out; one for body text).

Use professional language. DON’T be casual in your language, avoid slang words or short forms (eg: don’t use “doc” instead of “document”). DON’T use personal pronouns (“I” and “me”). A resume is a form of business communication, which should be best written in an impersonal brisk and active tone of voice.

continued ...

...continued

How to create a good first impression – 2

SOME BEST PRACTICE IDEAS

Use “**easy to read**” **fonts and font sizes** (not smaller than 10pt size).

Use plenty of white space on your resume. Thus leave enough margins, spaces between categories; don't crowd. Don't cram every single detail into a resume with no margins and tiny fonts. Use white space and go to additional pages or cut out unnecessary information. Leave enough of margin space.

Use bold and italics to **highlight important information**. Highlight those words that you want to catch the attention of the evaluator. This also makes it easier for the person to quickly read through your resume without getting into reading every word.

Presentation Goal 2:
My resume is “easy to read”

Don't make it long and boring. **Be brief, simple, and clear**. When writing your resumé, ask yourself, “Will this statement help me get a call for an interview?” Only include information that gets the answer “yes” to that question.

Have a **summary section** demonstrating the skill level and experiences directly related to the position being sought.

Write in **short paragraphs** for a “quick” read and **use bullets to showcase** your achievements.

How to create a good first impression – 3

SOME BEST PRACTICE IDEAS

Write to the future. Rather than just giving long boring lists of things done in the past, talk about how these will help you in the job or in the career path you wish to pursue. Present your work in a forward looking way.

Eg: Instead of saying “I did a project on Garbage Waste”, say “In the project on Garbage Waste I learnt that it was not enough to simply collect and present data from the internet, but it was also important to present some alternative solutions that the local community could actually apply.”

Consider using a **typestyle** other than Times New Roman, which is the most-widely used of all fonts. Arial, Tahoma, Verdana, Garamond or any one of a number of other typestyles are clean and crisp, yet give your resume a **unique appeal**.

Presentation Goal 3:
My resume is inviting and appealing

NOTE: “Inviting” does not mean loud and colorful.

Re-weight your skills / capabilities / experience. Talk of those things that will be directly relevant to the evaluator first. A reader will be interested if he/she sees you have what he/she wants.

Use **attractive stationery** that will stand out and look appealing. (Eg: cream colored instead of white paper that maybe slightly textured; high-quality paper; etc.) This can make your resume not only look professional, but also classy and elegant.

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How to create a good first impression – 4

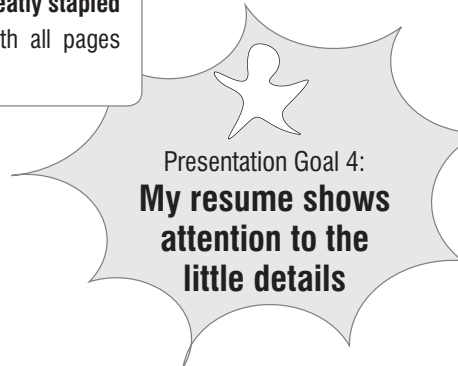
SOME BEST PRACTICE IDEAS

Carelessness in the little details shows how careless you will be at work. Thus communicate care and attention in every action related to the resume.

Ensure your resume (if more than 1 page), is **neatly stapled** in one corner with all pages **carefully aligned**.

Ensure it is **not shabby looking**. Eg: there are no dirt marks, fold marks other than the 2 folds for putting into the envelope, etc.

Use a neatly addressed envelope (with no scratches if hand-written). Use a business size envelope (eg: 110mmX220mm).



Produce **high-quality output**. Use good quality A4 size paper (bond paper or alabaster). Use a good printer with even, neat print. (These days resumes are expected to be printed rather than typed or hand-written).

How to create a good first impression – 5

SOME BEST PRACTICE IDEAS

When you submit a resume with errors, you've almost certainly eliminated yourself from consideration. Before prospective employers meet you, they meet a "piece of paper" (or electronic document), and that "piece of paper" demonstrates the quality of work that you produce. If you want someone to extend you the offer for an interview and then a job, you had better be sure that your resume is 100% accurate and indicative of the quality of work you will perform for that company.

Get **at least 2 other people** (who are good in the language), to check your resume for language, spelling, framing errors.



**PROOFREAD,
PROOFREAD,
PROOFREAD!**

PROJECT 3: Build a Level 2 Resume for yourself

Form Project Teams of 3-4 students each. In your project team, take up each project team member's resume one at a time for discussion. For each team member's resume –

STEP 1: In light of the class discussions and the best practices given here, what suggestions can be made to re-package and re-present this resume, so that all 5 Presentation Goals given here are met.

The concerned team member should take note of all these suggestions.

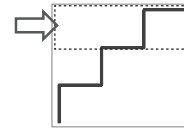
STEP 2: Individually, use these suggestions to re-package and re-present your own resume.

Bring this re-packaged resume back to your project team for discussion.

STEP 3: In the Project Team, take up each resume and discuss to check whether all 5 presentation goals are met –

- Presentation Goal 1: My resume looks and sounds “professional”
- Presentation Goal 2: My resume is “easy to read”
- Presentation Goal 3: My resume is inviting and appealing
- Presentation Goal 4: My resume shows attention to the little details
- Presentation Goal 5: My resume is “error-free”

Give any more suggestions for improvement to concerned team member.



Level 3 Resume: Contributor Profile

At the third level, you need to **present your contributor profile**.

To be able to do this, you need to first identify what capacities you have developed in your life, that will help you contribute better in the workplace. Then you will be able to present these capacities in your resume.

These capacities could have been developed through any activity you have done “well” in your past. So the first task is to unearth these “capacities” from the various sets of activities you may have done well in.

For example:

Activity Set	Therefore how I can contribute better in a workplace
I love singing. I have learnt classical singing since the age of 8, practicing regularly.	I have built the self-discipline to be able to work in a focused manner for long hours, without getting tired.
I get along well with people and make friends very easily. I have many lasting relationships.	I will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – work well in teams – create a positive environment in the work place – understand customers’ and users’ concerns, so as to serve them better
I am good at maths. I have done a Post Graduation degree in Mathematics.	I will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Analyze and interpret data and perceive patterns. – Work comfortably with abstract ideas. – Think through issues logically and systematically.
I am a good chess player.	I will be able to strategize and plan ahead.
I have won trophies in debating and elocution.	I will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Logically argue out issues and take a stand. This will help in thinking through issues and decisions. – Communicate ideas and present confidently.
I am an accomplished athlete. I have held the Athletics Championship for several years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I have the drive and competitive spirit to meet tough targets and achieve goals. – I can be rigorous and disciplined in the work I do.
I have played football with friends since the age of 10. I love football and am quite good at it.	I will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Work well in teams. – Take a lot of physical stress without getting tired, since I have built up the stamina.

PRACTICE EXERCISE 5:

- (i) Study all the solved examples given in the previous page.
- (ii) Using that as a guideline, take up each of the following activity sets and do open class brainstorming to unearth the “capacities” that will help a person contribute better in a workplace. [HINT: Think of what one “will be able to do...”]

Activity Set	Therefore how I can contribute better in a workplace
Captain of the sports team.	
I have done mountain climbing.	
I am a technology enthusiast. I am very good at figuring out technology gadgets and how they work.	
I do extensive internet browsing, interacting on social networks, blogging.	
I am a brown belt in karate.	
I have traveled to many places across India.	
I am good at cooking and invent many new recipes.	
I have attended a workshop on theatre.	
I teach my younger brother / sister regularly. I also help him / her plan study time-table.	
I am good at crafts, creating new things out of waste material.	
My notes are very systematic and comprehensive. All my classmates photocopy my notes for reference.	
I am good at gardening. I take care of plants and they grow well under my care.	

PRACTICE EXERCISE 6:

Individually – (i) Think of and put down 5 activity sets you have done well in the past / do regularly / are good at.

In small groups of 3-5 – (ii) For each activity set, brainstorm to define how it has made you more capable to be able to contribute better in a workplace.

Activity Set	Therefore how I can contribute better in a workplace
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

PROJECT 4: Build a Level 3 Resume for yourself

Form Project Teams of 3-5 students each.

Individually:

STEP 1: Make an inventory of all your qualifications, courses, awards, hobbies, skills, talents, projects and other activities that you have done well / regularly.

Taking the help of your project team:

STEP 2: For each item in your inventory, unearth what “capacities” you have developed while doing these, that will help you contribute better in the workplace.

STEP 3: Put down how you intend to demonstrate / prove each of these in case you are asked to do so by the employer.

NOTE: Talking about how you can contribute is not enough. For an employer to believe what you say, you need to also be able to demonstrate or prove this in some way. You can do this by giving examples from your personal or college life where you showed these capabilities in action. Though you may not put all of this into your resume, this thinking will be useful for your interview / any conversation with the employer.

Use STEPS 1, 2, 3 to build the following table for yourself –

My qualifications, courses, awards, hobbies, skills, talents, activity sets, etc.	Therefore how I can contribute better in a work place	How I intend to demonstrate / prove this

Take the help of your project team for specific suggestions on how to communicate your contributor profile, using your above filled-in table.

STEP 4: Re-write your resume to communicate the “capacities” that you have identified in the table above, so that you communicate your “Contributor Profile” to the employer (i.e. how you will be able to contribute better in the work place.)

[Use the sample of Mukund’s resume on page 18-19 as a guideline to write your “Contributor Profile”]

STEP 5: Check that your resume meets the expectations of the employer in the jobs you have short-listed to apply for (based on your work done in PROJECT 1). Refine your resume if necessary, to match expectations.

Mukund Sharma

D-181, Patrakar Colony, Sholapur
 Email: msharma@vsnl.com
 Date of Birth: 26th September, 1978

Contributor Profile

- Can take initiative, work under pressure and balance multi-tasking assignments. (e.g. balancing curricular and extra-curricular activities).
- Can be a good team member, especially in situations where tough and high stress goals have to be achieved. (e.g. mountain climbing).
- Have the tenacity to patiently work through an area, for achieving the desired results (e.g. practicing music).

Education Profile

Have displayed a consistent track record throughout my academic life

Year	Degree and University	Marks
1993-94	Secondary School Certificate Exam, State University, St. Peter Academy, Sholapur, with Science and Maths as major subjects	55%
1995-96	Higher Secondary Certificate Exam, State University, St. Peter Academy, Sholapur, with Maths, Physics, Chemistry as major subjects	58%
1996-2000	Bachelor of Engineering, College of Engineering, Indira Nagar, Computer Science	65%

Distinctions and Achievements

Have displayed the ability

- to balance academics with extra and co-curricular activities.
- to lead and motivate teams.
- to respond intelligently and quickly.

Year	Degree and University
1993-94	Captain of all the four houses of school
1995-96	Represented school at the national level quiz

Capacity to Contribute

Capacity to Contribute

Proof

Capacity to Contribute

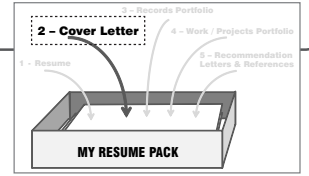
Proof

continued...

...continued

Co-curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities]----- <i>Capacity to Contribute</i>	
Have actively done management and soft skill courses in keeping with current environmental needs.			
Year	Experience]----- <i>Proof</i>
1997 (Nov-Dec)	Soft skill course		
1998 (Apr-June)	Part-time diploma in management		
2000 (Jan- Apr)	Course in banking and finance		
Academic Project			
Quick Cash Banking Solution: Banks need to keep their customer information quickly accessible and secure. In order to answer this need, Quick Cash Bank sponsored a project to develop an algorithm which would optimize a query for customer information leading to faster access in huge databases without sacrificing the important security concerns. Our team accomplished this project within the given constraints.			
This project taught me to identify an area in banking, where software application can give added advantage.]----- <i>Capacity to Contribute</i>	
Practical Experience			
I was chosen for summer internship at the prestigious MBI Lab in Delhi. This internship involved working on cutting edge software technologies with the best brains in the country. The focus of my internship was to check and validate various modules, which were building blocks for huge software.			
During the internship I acquired a keen appreciation of the heavy costs that software companies have to pay for small errors in module development, and the ways to avoid such errors.]----- <i>Capacity to Contribute</i>	
Areas of Interest			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software project management. • Researching and developing interesting computer games using artificial intelligence. 			
Skills and Hobbies			
1. FORMAL TRAINING IN CARNATIC MUSIC: Have been trained since the age of six. Helps in maintaining discipline and concentration at work.]----- <i>Capacity to Contribute</i>	
2. TREKKING: Includes regular weekend treks to small and big peaks in the Vindhyas. Have climbed up to Gangotri in the summer of 2001. Such treks helped in keeping enthusiasm alive in tiring situations.]----- <i>Capacity to Contribute</i>	
3. ASTROPHYSICS: Have interest in exploring various hidden aspects of universe. This has helped in developing an attitude of looking beyond the obvious.]----- <i>Capacity to Contribute</i>	

13.4 Write your Cover Letter



The cover letter gives the employer / evaluator a quick snapshot of why you might be the “right candidate” for them. Looking at this, the employer may get drawn into going through your resume in detail OR decide that your resume is not worth his/her time. Thus, pay good attention to the cover letter you write.

What your Cover Letter should contain –

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Why you are sending
 “This is with reference to ...”
 “Please refer to your advertisement dated ...”</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What are your enclosures
 “Enclosed herewith is the ...”
 “Please find enclosed ...”</p> |
| <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What is your value add (how you can contribute)
 “I have displayed consistency in ...”
 “My unique capabilities in this area include ...”</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What you expect in return
 “Looking forward to meeting you ...”
 “I would appreciate an appointment with you so that ...”</p> |

PRACTICE EXERCISE 7:

Study Geeta’s cover letter. Notice 2 aspects (i) the basic letter format (ii) what is being communicated and how

Date : 2nd January, 2003

To,
 The Human Resources Division
 M.M. Publications Limited,
 P.B. No. 226, Erayilkadavu,
 Kottayam – 686 001.

Salutation → Dear Sir/Madam,

Subject → Subject: Application for the post of "Illustrator"

Body → This has reference to your advertisement in Ascent TOI, dated 2nd January, 2003 for the post of illustrator.

My unique capabilities in this area include an easy grasp of concepts and translating them into friendly designs

As indicated in the resume, I have had some worthwhile experiences while working with an advertising agency. My project on CAD, as part of the academic curriculum, was declared the best project for the year.

Enclosed alongwith my resume are some samples of my works.

I feel that my talents and training match your requirements as will be clear, when we meet. Hoping to hear from you.

Complimentary Close → Sincerely,

Signature →

Sender's Name → GEETA K. MISRA

Enclosures → Encl : 1. Resumé
 2. Certificates
 3. Work samples

continued...

...continued

Notice (i) the basic letter format Geeta has used

Notice and put down –

- How has Geeta addressed the reader of the letter?

- How has she framed the “subject” of the letter? Why is it important to mention the “subject”?

- How has she closed and signed off the letter? What are some other ways in which you could close the letter? Would these be appropriate for this purpose? Why?

- Why is it important to mention the ‘list’ of documents enclosed / attached with the cover letter? What could happen if she didn’t mention this list?

continued...

...continued

Notice (ii) what is being communicated and how Geeta has communicated this

Imagine you were the person receiving this cover letter with Geeta's resume attached –

- Why is it important to mention “why you are sending” this application? What if Geeta skipped this part in the letter?

- Mentioning her “value add” in the cover letter was not essential. Why do you think Geeta mentioned this? How did it help you as a reader / evaluator?

- Why is it important to clarify “what you expect in return”? How does this help you as the reader / evaluator?

- On seeing this cover letter, would you want to open and read her resume? Why?

PROJECT 5: Write your Cover Letter

Form Project Teams of 3-5 students each.

Individually, using the Cover Letter checklist and Geeta's sample letter (on page 20) as a guideline –

STEP 1: For any one of the jobs you are considering applying for (short-listed in PROJECT 1), write a cover letter for the resume you will send to this employer, so as to apply for this job.

Taking the help of your project team –

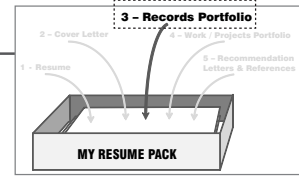
STEP 2: Present your cover letter to your project team and get its feedback on whether it has understood through your letter –

- Why you are sending this application
- What is your value add (how you can contribute - identified in PROJECT 4) and is this aligned with what the employer expects (identified in PROJECT 1)
- What are your enclosures
- What you expect in return

Note down suggestions for improvement based on the feedback of your team.

STEP 3: Refine your cover letter based on the team's suggestions.

13.5 Assemble your Records Portfolio



Your track-record (mark-sheets, certificates, etc.) builds your basic credibility with the employer / evaluator. It is less important to have high marks, what is most important is that your records are accurate and true.

These don't have to be sent to the employer, but will need to be shown to them once asked for in the interview. Thus ensure your claims in your resume are backed up by strong records where necessary.

Checklist of basic records expected in your portfolio

- Mark-lists and university certificates for highest qualification (e.g.: BE or MA degree)
- Mark-lists for all key intervening years (e.g.: first year, second year, third year of college)
- 12th std board exam mark-list
- 10th std board exam mark-list
- Certificates of any significant awards – such as scholarships, state-level or national awards, etc.
- Work experience certificates (including any internship you may have done, etc).
- Salary certificate of last employment (if you were employed)
- Certificates of any special concessions availed (e.g.: OBC certificate)

NOTE: Never send originals, only photocopies. Carry originals with you when you meet them, so they can verify the photocopies you give them.

How to develop a Records Portfolio

SOME BEST PRACTICE IDEAS

Ensure what you present is credible

- If your certificates are not issued by a well-known, credible source, then ensure you are prepared to back up your claims with background information on the source, contact details of people who employers can talk to (in case they want to investigate the genuineness of the source).
- Don't fabricate. Most employers / institutions do a background check to verify credentials. Thus if they find out inconsistencies or fabrications in what you submit, they can black-list you in that job market.

Ensure your academic track record is complete

- Ensure you have a complete set of certificates to support your academic track-record.
- If there are any serious gaps in records (e.g.: first year college mark sheet is missing), then ensure you have a good reason for this, with support documentation (e.g.: a letter issued by the college) in case needed.

GOAL:
My credentials are strong and accurate

Ensure your additional certificates (beyond academics) are relevant

- Focus on the few really powerful certificates and documents that make you stand out. Mention only these in your resume.
- Don't use piles of certificates that may not be relevant to the job you are applying for (e.g.: a certificate of first prize in elocution won in junior school).

Keep ready originals and photocopies

- Employers may ask you to leave copies of mark-sheets / certificates with them.
- They may want to verify copies against the originals.

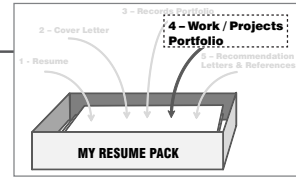
PROJECT 6: Assemble your Records Portfolio

STEP 1: Use the checklist and best practice guidelines given here to assemble your records portfolio.

STEP 2: Look at all the “claims” you have made about your capacity to contribute better in the workplace (identified in PROJECT 4). Identify all the records you have that can demonstrate each of these. Add these records to your portfolio and mention these in your resume if needed.

13.6 Build your Work / Projects Portfolio

A Work / Projects Portfolio demonstrates samples of work done by you, to help employers assess your competence for the job and the quality of your work.



Different professions are typically associated with certain types of work samples (e.g.: a designer would need to have a Design Portfolio to show samples of his/her work).

Some Typical Portfolios

My Portfolio

Portfolios are a common requirement in the design, media, entertainment industries. A portfolio is a compilation of the best samples of your actual work (like an album). You may have developed these work samples during some project done for a client, or during college practical / project work, or during your own practice (not in relation to any external project).

- Design portfolio
- Art portfolio
- Photography album / portfolio
- Modeling portfolio
- Music portfolio

Product Output

You could demonstrate some of the outputs of projects you may have done (in college or at work) – such as a product or presentation.

- Ensure you have the permission to show this (it should not violate privacy or intellectual property rights).
- Acknowledge other team members' contributions in making the product.
- Acknowledge copyrights etc. (if any).
- Get these attested by the institution / organization / team lead.

In case you cannot show the actual product (e.g.: if it is too big to carry), then you can show photographs of it.

Project Report

Project reports may be –

- Part of the output delivered in a project
- OR a written record by you of your project experience.
- In the project experience report include –
 - the goals of the project
 - context
 - process followed in the project
 - team involved
 - the thinking that went into it, project learnings, references used, photographs, etc.

In case you have been part of a project where you have no concrete product or output to show, it is a good idea to make your own project report and get it affirmed by your project leader / guide / institution.

Research Report

- You may have undertaken a research study on your own initiative or as part of a project.
- Even in cases where you haven't made a formal report, it is a good idea to write out and present what you did.
- In the research report include –
 - purpose of your research
 - the research methodology followed
 - sources used
 - samples of research data / work done
 - inferences, learnings, recommendations, etc.
- In case you had a guide, get a recommendation from him/her.

Show-reel

Samples of work that have been composed together as a demo for a viewer (like a short film). This maybe put onto a CD or as a short film on the internet.

PROJECT 7: Build a Work / Projects Portfolio for yourself

Form Project Teams of 3-5 students each.

STEP 1: Study the typical portfolios (on page 26) and guidelines for each, mentioned here. Discuss these in your project team.

STEP 2: Brainstorm in your project team to generate ideas on – what kind of Work / Projects Portfolio(s) you can create for yourselves.

STEP 3: Discuss in your project team, what you need to do (what is involved) to build such a portfolio for yourself.

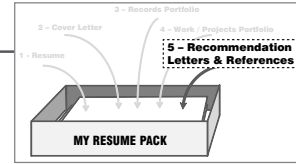
STEP 4: Build a Work / Projects Portfolio for yourself.

NOTE: Try to support / demonstrate the capacities you have identified in PROJECT 4, with this Work / Projects Portfolio.

Keep in mind:

- *The choice of 'work samples' should be made according to relevance to a potential employer. For example, if the company you are applying to is an accounting firm, and if you have done any project or responsibility in which accounting is involved, then carry some sample of your work there. This might give you an edge over others. For this, refer to the employer's expectations that you have identified in PROJECT 1 for the jobs you have short-listed.*
- *Work samples are usually not submitted but are carried along with you only when you meet the employer (in an interview). However, you need to keep the samples ready and mention these in your resume.*
- *It is also possible to upload your work samples onto the internet, and provide the link in your resume.*

13.7 Recommendation Letters and References



The employer / evaluator uses recommendation letters or talks to people you have provided as “references”, to find out more from someone who knows you on – your personal qualities, accomplishments, and experiences that the person thinks you possess. They also use this as a basis to verify some of your claims, get an insight into your background, and so on.

[1] Choosing a person to recommend you

The quality of this input to the employer / evaluator depends on how well the writer / person referred knows you. Thus choose who you are giving this responsibility to, carefully. Check that –

- Your referees should have knowledge of your academic, professional / working life.
- Be ready with at least two people to refer you. These people will be contacted by telephone for their comments. Always ask permission to use a person as a referee and be sure to explain the nature of the position. Also mention the essential and desirable skills for the position, as this is what the referee will be asked to comment on.
- Where possible, choose those people who are able to articulate their views and those who will be seen in the eyes of the potential employer as credible. In most instances people you have reported to (bosses, project guides, etc.) should be on your list of referees.
- The more well-known the person or the higher his/her position in the organizational hierarchy, the greater the weight his/her opinion will carry.
- The referees you select may vary with different jobs. The employer is checking for your competence in a particular position. Do not include referees who will relate skills not required for the job you are applying for.
- In addition to references, you may be asked for contact information concerning your current supervisor / guide. However, prospective employers should get your permission before contacting your current supervisor to avoid jeopardizing your current position.
- If you are new in an industry or just starting your career, don't underestimate or forget references that relate to your personal life. If you have been an active, outgoing student, etc. – include these achievements. Get recommendations from seniors / guides from college or people you have worked with during internship.

[2] How to ask for a letter of recommendation

- Don't ask "Could you write a letter of reference for me?" - Anyone can write a letter. The problem can be what they are going to write about.
- Ask "Do you feel you know my work well enough to write me a good recommendation letter?" or "Do you feel you could give me a good reference?" That way, your referee has an easy way out if they are not comfortable writing a letter and you can be assured that those who say "yes" will be enthusiastic about your performance and will write a positive letter.

[3] What a recommendation letter can include

Here are some tips about what the employer is expecting to see in a recommendation letter.

FIRST PARAGRAPH

- The first paragraph should include in what capacity and for how long the referee has known you. This could include - the term of employment, the responsibilities of the position, and any significant projects undertaken. A sentence about the nature of the company and its activities. A one-sentence overview of the referee's opinion of you.

SECOND PARAGRAPH

- The next paragraph could have a more detailed evaluation of you as an employee. It can describe your performance on specific assignments and list any important accomplishments. It should also state his/her opinion of your strengths or shortcomings in the workplace – what it was like to interact with you.

THIRD PARAGRAPH

This paragraph will sum things up

- With a broader characterization of your nature – were you responsible, polite, warm, disagreeable, lazy, spiteful, etc.
- And finally, it could indicate the degree to which the referee recommends you for the position you are seeking: without reservation, strongly, with some reservation, or not at all.

PRACTICE EXERCISE 8:

Study this recommendation letter written for Mukund

Computer Science Department

College of Engineering,
Indira Nagar

July 20, 2000

Dear Mr. Sinha,

I am writing this reference letter at the request of Mukund Sharma, who has applied for the position of 'Software Developer'.

Mukund worked under me as a project student for Quick Cash Bank's "Query optimization project" for which I was his project guide. Based on his commitment, along with his enthusiasm and participation, I'd rate his performance in my team as A+.

Over the course of our interaction, I am impressed with Mukund's sound and in depth knowledge of fundamental concepts, and his power of application. Given his strong analytical abilities and rigorous approach towards problem solving, I expect him to have a great career in software development and testing.

He also has excellent oral and written communication skills in English and a steady temperament that helps him get along well with his peers and teachers.

In conclusion, I would highly recommend Mukund for the position of Software Developer in your organisation. I strongly believe that he will live up to the job's expectations.

Sincerely yours,

Hari Khosla
Assistant Professor,
Computer Science Department,
College of Engineering, Indira Nagar.

Q1. What does this letter tell you about Mukund (that you didn't know from his resume)?

...continued

...continued

Q2. Imagine you were the employer Mukund was applying to. What is the value of getting another person's opinion on what Mukund is like to work with?

Q3. What if Mukund had submitted such a recommendation letter from a relative instead of a college guide or person he has worked with? How would this affect the credibility of what is said in the letter?

PROJECT 8: Get Recommendation Letters for yourself

STEP 1: Choose 3 people who can recommend you (using the guideline (1) given on page 28).

STEP 2: Request them to write a recommendation letter for you (using the guideline (2) given on page 29).

You can show them this sample Cover Letter (Mukund's Letter on page 30) as a guiding template.

The material in this booklet is meant to be studied along with the material available at gtu.ibecome.in

You will find videos, concept presentations, quizzes to improve your understanding of the topic.

Booklet printed from I-Become ActivGuide