

2.4: Selling U - Résumé and Cover Letter Essentials

Learning Objectives

- Learn how to position your education and experience to create a résumé and cover letter to get the job you want.

Think about how you first learned about the new Palm Pre smartphone or that Gatorade had changed its name to simply “G.” How did you know that Pre had even more capabilities than the iPhone or that Gatorade was “moving to the next level”? Chances are it was some kind of advertising or public relations that made you aware of these products before you even tried them.

Now think about your personal brand. How will employers know about you and what you have to offer? A résumé and cover letter serve as your “advertising” campaign to prospective employers. Just like there are lots of ads about products and services, there are an overwhelming number of **résumés** and **cover letters** that employers have to review before inviting someone in for an interview. How do you make yours stand out? How do you increase your chances of being one of the people who are interviewed? How do you use your cover letter and your résumé to get the job you want?

There are a few important steps to follow to create the résumé and cover letter that will make you different and compelling to a prospective employer. You will use both of these to apply for jobs online and to send to people with whom you are networking, and you will even send them directly to companies for whom you would like to work. You only have an instant (think nanosecond) to make a lasting impression. If you think you only need a résumé to get a job, you should think again. Your cover letter can play an even more important role than your résumé. Here are some steps to help you create a cover letter that gets read and a résumé that gets you the interview. If you already have a résumé and cover letter, it’s worth reviewing this section because you will learn some important tips to improve them.

Five Steps for a Résumé That Stands Out

Looking for the right job to start your career is a process that includes preparing your résumé and cover letter, getting your cover letter and résumé to the right people, going on interviews, and negotiating and accepting the right offer. You are at the beginning of the process; you’ll learn about the rest of the process throughout the *Selling U* sections in this book. This section focuses entirely on creating your résumé and cover letter. Keep in mind that the only purpose for a résumé and cover letter is to get an interview. So your résumé and cover letter need to be crafted in a way that tells what your personal brand has to offer, or your **brand story**, in a concise and compelling way.

Step 1: Define Your Three Brand Points That Make You Unique and Provide Value to a Prospective Employer

If this sounds familiar, it should be. This was covered in detail in Chapter 1, but it is such an essential concept that it deserves repetition here. If you haven’t identified your three brand points, you should go back and review the section. Your brand points are actually the foundation of your résumé and cover letter; it is in their summary that you compose your brand story.

You might think of creating a résumé that is a chronological summary of your background. This is good, but it is not compelling enough to differentiate yourself amid the sea of résumés. There are two important things to remember when creating your résumé:

1. Tell your brand story with your brand points.
2. Your brand points should be clear at a glance (literally).

Let’s say your three brand points are leadership experience, academic excellence, and community service. Those three brand points make up your brand story, the story that you want to tell about yourself, so your résumé headings should highlight these areas.

To see what this means, review the two versions of the same résumé for Julianna Lanely in Figure 2.4.7 and Figure 2.4.8. The first one was written using a standard résumé approach; the second one was built by incorporating her brand points of marketing and event planning experience, academic excellence, and creative mind-set. Can you see the difference? Which résumé do you think is more compelling? Before you create (or refine) your résumé, identify your three brand points.

JULIANNA LANELY

Current Address: 40 First Avenue Apt. 214, New London, CT 06458
 E-mail: janel001@gmail.com
 (508) 444-2141

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a job in a dynamic environment that challenges me to implement and expand my strong creative, organizational, and communication skills.

EDUCATION

Northeastern College, Hartford, CT
 Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Marketing Communications, May 2010
 • GPA: 3.73 overall

EXPERIENCE

January 2008–Present Work Study
 Marketing Department, Northeastern University, Hartford, CT
 • Assisted professors with marketing research
 • Helped administrative assistant

September 2009–December 2009 Marketing and Events Intern
The Best of Connecticut Magazine, Hartford, CT
 • Assisted in planning magazine events
 • Proofed and copyedited Special Section Advertisements of the magazine
 • Participated in the conceptualization and copywriting of promotional material
 • Prepared recap and sponsorship portfolios for clients

May 2007–September 2009 Creative Designer
 Fresh Petals Florist, Hartford, CT
 • Designed floral arrangements and wedding centerpieces
 • Created ideas for holiday and themed weekend decorations
 • Worked as a team player and under strict time schedules

ACTIVITIES

Connecticut Ad Club, Hartford, CT
Member, October 2008–Present

Ireland Study Tour
Student, May 2008–June 2008
 • Experienced the culture and history of various locations in Ireland

American Marketing Association
 Membership Committee member, September 2009–Present
 • Membership Committee member

Hand in Hand, Northeastern College, Hartford, CT
 Member, September 2008–Present
 • Responsible for the health care of those with special needs

AWARDS

Mu Kappa Tau National Marketing Honor Society, Northeastern College, May 2009
 Beta Gamma Sigma International Business Honor Society, Northeastern College, May 2009
 Connecticut Young Business Leader Club's "Rising Star" Award, January 2009
 National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Northeastern College, May 2009

Font is too small and hard to read.

Objective is too general.

Academic achievements are not highlighted.

Horizontal lines make it hard for the reader to easily scan your brand points.

Generic headings don't highlight your brand points.

Activities are too general and do not underscore any particular skill.

These impressive accomplishments are pushed to the bottom of the page.

The first entry should be the most important position.

Listing dates first is distracting and makes it hard for the reader to see where you have worked.

Figure 2.4.7: Standard Résumé

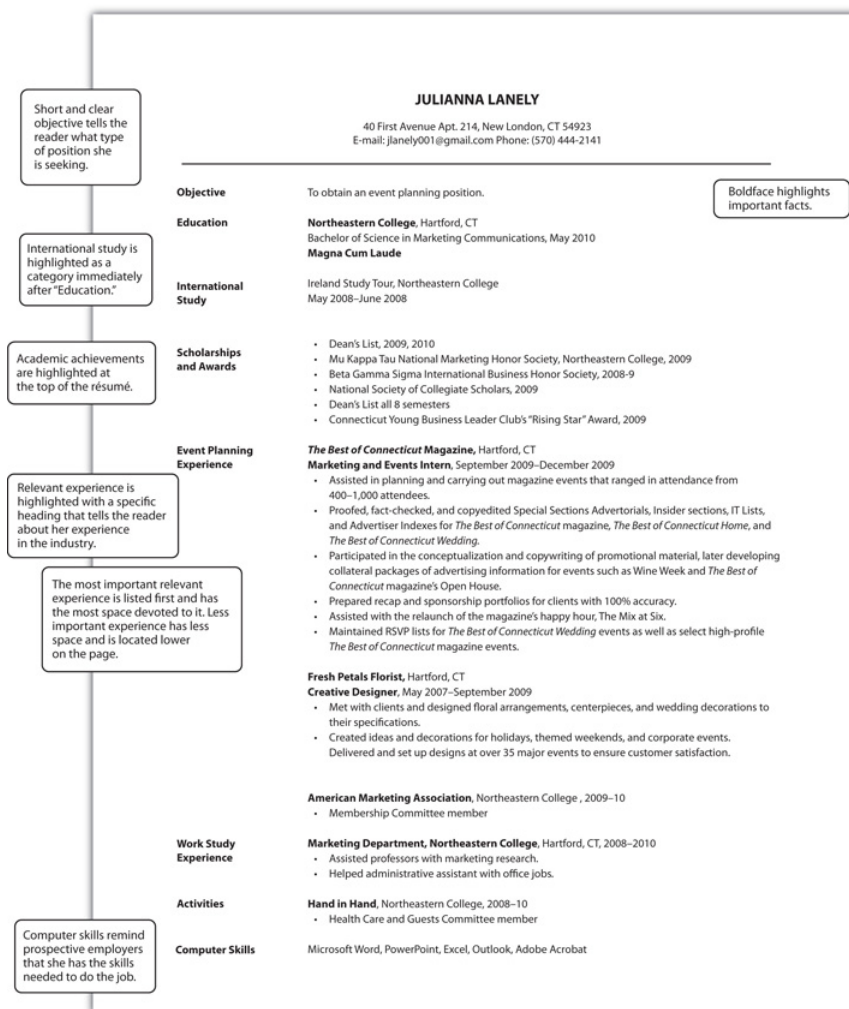


Figure 2.4.8: Standard Résumé Incorporating Brand Points

Step 2: Choose Your Résumé Format and Font

Now that you have the foundation of your résumé message (or your three brand points), it's time to choose a résumé format. Executives in all industries encourage students and young professionals (those who have been working for five years or less) not to exceed one page for your résumé. In some cases, it may be difficult to keep all of your experience and accomplishments to one page, so choose those that best tell your brand story. As one executive said, "It better be worth my while to turn to page two." Connie Pearson-Bernard, "Careers in Communications Night," presentation at West Chester University, West Chester, PA, March 23, 2009.

There are several appropriate résumé templates available at your campus career center or in Microsoft Word. The downside to some templates is that they are difficult to adjust or adapt. The most important thing to consider when you are choosing your résumé format is to be sure it is easy for the reader to skim. Some formats with horizontal lines separating the categories, or those with dates that precede company and position information, are harder to skim because the reader has to work too hard to see the brand story. See the comments in Figure 2.4.7 to recognize some things to avoid in your résumé.

It's easy to create a résumé that looks like Julianna Lanely's revised résumé shown in Figure 2.4.8. Simply watch this short video and see how you can format it.

✓ Video Clip

Résumé Formatting

[click to see video](#)



See how easy it is to format your résumé using a table in Word.

Once you choose the format you want to use, you should choose a font that you will use for your résumé and cover letter. The font should be easy to read like Arial or Times New Roman (Arial is a bit more contemporary; Times New Roman is more traditional). It's best to use twelve-point type (or eleven-point at the smallest) for ease of readability. If you need a little more space on your résumé, consider adjusting the margins slightly, keeping at least 0.7 for each margin. You don't want your résumé to feel crowded or that it is an effort to read.

Step 3: Choose Your Headings and Put the Most Important Ones First

Now that you've done your groundwork, it's time to actually create your résumé. Think about your brand points and then determine the headings you want to use. Use headings that help you tell your brand story at a glance. Don't focus yet on what you will write in each heading; that will be covered in Step 4.

There are some headings that are standard to include such as "Objective," "Education," and "Experience," but other headings should be used to support your brand story. For example, instead of having a heading for "Work Experience," be more specific and use "Sales Experience" to highlight that if it is one of your brand points.

One of the most critical things to remember is to put the most important things first. Start with a heading for "Objective," then "Education." As you gain more experience in your career, your education will move to the bottom. But at this point, it is a key selling point for your brand.

Now, it's time to put your brand points to work by choosing headings that tell your story. For example, if academic excellence is one of your brand points, you might consider adding a heading after "Education" called "Scholarships and Awards" or "Honors" to highlight honors and awards that demonstrate your academic excellence. This is the ideal place for things like dean's list, National Honor Society, or any other awards, honors, or scholarships that you have received.

It's a good idea for your next heading to reflect one of your brand points such as "Leadership Skills" or "Sales Experience" (or any other specific type of experience). If leadership skills are one of your brand points, it's better to *not* make the reader go all the way to the bottom of the page to read about your leadership skills under a generic heading called "Activities." If it's important to your brand story, bring your skills into focus in the first part of your résumé with a strong heading like "Leadership Skills." This section could include athletic, school or professional organization, or any other type of leadership position. If you don't have leadership skills, don't worry—you still have a lot to offer. Follow your brand points to tell your story.

Next, include your work experience. This is where you can really make your brand story come alive. Don't be restricted to a traditional chronological order of your jobs. If you have had an internship in marketing, sales, or other area that supports your brand points, make a separate heading for it, such as "Marketing Experience" or "Sales Experience." If you have had other jobs, you can simply add another heading after it called "Work Experience" below it. Or if your work experience has a common theme, you might want to name your heading "Retail Experience," "Customer Service Experience," or "Hospitality Experience." This approach tells the reader at a glance that you have valuable experience in the area you want to pursue. You should know that employers look for people who have worked in retail and in restaurants because they know that they can sell and work with customers. Use this type of experience to sell yourself.

If you have participated in projects or activities to support the community, you may want to include a heading for “Community Service.” If you have additional activities that are worth noting, you might consider a heading for “Activities.” It’s best to avoid a long list of generic activities at the end of your résumé, so think about how they tell your brand story. It’s best to include your most recent activities. Although you may include some key activities from high school, it’s better if you can replace those with your more recent activities. It’s not necessary to include the dates of your involvement.

It’s a good idea to have a final heading for “Skills” at the end of your résumé. This should include computer software in which you are proficient such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Access, Adobe Acrobat, and others. It’s a good reminder to your prospective employer that you are skilled for any position. Although it may seem second nature to you to use these software products, there are employers who didn’t learn them in school so they may not be aware that you are proficient in them.

A few things that should *not* be included on your résumé are “References available upon request,” “Hobbies and Activities,” or a photo. Prospective employers expect to check your references, you should have more substantial things to put on your résumé than hobbies and activities, and many companies cannot consider résumés with photos as it would be considered discrimination.

See Rakeem Bateman’s résumé shown in Figure 2.4.9 to see how headings are used effectively to highlight his brand points of leadership skills, sales experience, and a committed work ethic.

Rakeem S. Bateman
 3901 Western Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 54321
 Phone: 702-555-1234
 rakeembateman@gmail.com
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/rakeembateman>

Objective	To obtain an internship in sales at a foodservice company.
Education	Tri-State Community College , Minneapolis, MN Associate's Degree, Business Administration, Expected 2010
Leadership Skills	Green For Life , Minneapolis, MN President, Student Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided leadership to 30-member student club that focuses on green initiatives in the community • Raised \$2,300 to support sustainability efforts with a community service campaign called "Go Green Now"
Sales Experience	Recovery Systems, Inc. , Minneapolis, MN Account Management Intern , Summer 2009 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted industry and client research for new business pitches for the \$300 million systems disaster recovery provider • Assisted with new business presentation preparation including PowerPoint slides, video, and scripting • Developed social media strategy to develop a community for existing customers and attract new customers, including a blog, LinkedIn profile, and Twitter account; strategy generated over 30 new leads in 4 weeks • Provided weekly updates to 3 clients, including timelines and conference reports; created a new reporting dashboard that became the standard in the company for all client updates • Maintained budget and created reporting including graphs to easily communicate actual expenses compared to plan
Work Experience	Olive Garden Restaurant , Minneapolis, MN Wait Staff , June 2007–Present <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided customer service to over 100 customers during each shift • Generated guest check average 8% higher than the restaurant average • Winner of "The Sweet Taste of Success" Sales Contest Seymour and Jones Attorneys at Law , Land of Lakes, MN Administrative Assistant , Summers 2005–6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained schedules and expenses for office to support 5 lawyers
Computer Skills	Proficient in Microsoft Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Outlook, Camtasia and iMovie video editing

Figure 2.4.1: Standard Résumé Incorporating Effective Headings

Step 4: Write Your Bullet Points

Once you have determined your headings, it's time to make your brand points come alive with bullet points under each heading. Bullet points are better than a narrative format because they are easier for the reader to skim. But, since the reader is skimming, each bullet point is that much more important. Keep your bullet points concise, but specific, so that each delivers powerful information.

Start with your objective and write a short, specific goal. One sentence is perfect; you don't have to be flowery or profound. Something that helps the reader understand what you are looking for is best. For example, if you want to get a job in pharmaceutical sales, your objective might be, "To obtain a sales position at a pharmaceutical company." Or you might want to get a job in an advertising agency so your objective might be, "To obtain a full-time position in account management at an advertising agency." Short, sweet, to the point, and effective.

For your education, include the formal name of your college or university, city and state, formal degree (e.g., Bachelor of Arts, Communication Studies), and year or expected year of graduation. It's not necessary to include the range of years you attended school. Now that you are in college, it's best to remove your high school education. See Figure 2.4.9 for an example of how to list your education. You may be interested to know that your grade point average is not a requirement on a résumé. Generally, if your GPA is 3.5 or above, you may want to include it. Kim Richmond, *Brand You*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 156. The fact is most business people don't recognize the significance of a GPA unless it's 4.0. So, if academic achievement is one of your brand points, you should consider adding a heading for "Scholarship and Awards" to demonstrate your accomplishments and make them come alive for the reader. If academics aren't your strong suit, don't include your GPA; just list your education. Kim Richmond, *Brand You*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 156. If you have studied internationally, you might consider a heading or subheading named "International Study." Include the program name, school, and countries visited, as well as the dates of the travel.

Awards or honors can be listed as bullet points under the "Scholarship and Awards" heading. For experience headings such as "Leadership Experience," "Sales Experience," or "Customer Service Experience," list the name of the company, city and state, your title, and dates of employment. If you use boldface for the company name, it stands out and helps the reader see at a glance where you have worked. The bullet points in these sections are critical to setting yourself apart; they should be concise and specific, but descriptive, and they should focus on accomplishments and contributions, not a listing of activities or tasks. This will most likely take some time to write these bullet points, but it will be time well spent. Consider the difference between these two bullet points to describe a position at a restaurant:

- This statement can be more powerful when restated with quantitative details:
- *Provided customer service to over 100 patrons during every shift, including taking orders by phone and at table-side; named Associate of the Month in August 2009*

Consider the difference between these two bullet points to describe administrative responsibilities at an office:

- This line can be more powerful when restated in the following manner:
- *Provided administrative support for the 30-person office; created new work flow for processing invoices that reduced turnaround time by 2 days*

Consider the difference between these two bullet points to describe responsibilities as a bank teller:

- This statement can be more powerful when restated as the following:
- *Processed over 80 customer transactions daily with 100% accuracy.*

Your bullet points should help reinforce your brand points with details of how you delivered on those points. It might be helpful to write down all the things you did at each job and then identify the stories you can tell for each job. This is how you demonstrate traits such as ability to multitask, organizational skills, teamwork, and other skills.

Step 5: Review, Check Spelling, Proofread, and Repeat

It's true that some résumés are never even considered because of a typo or grammar error. After you finish your résumé, take a break, and then review it objectively. Does it clearly tell your brand story? Are your brand points the most important topics? If someone read your résumé, what would that person think you have to offer? Make any necessary adjustments. Then spell-check and proofread it carefully. It's a good idea to ask some people you trust—perhaps at your campus career center, a parent, professor, or mentor—to review and proofread your résumé. You can't be too cautious.

When you are satisfied that your résumé is perfect, print it on twenty-four-pound paper (you can buy it at your campus bookstore or any office supply store or Web site).

✓ You've Got the Power: Tips for Your Job Search

How to Save It

It's best to save your résumé and cover letter in several formats. A Word document is standard for sending résumés and cover letters. However, online job posting boards remove formatting, so it's best to also save your documents as .txt files in Microsoft Word (File, Save As, for file type choose "Plain Text (*.txt)." Click OK when the dialogue box appears. Check your document to be sure elements are still in place; adjust accordingly, then save). It's also helpful to save your documents in PDF format by going to Acrobat.com. Kim Richmond, *Brand You*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 224. It's a good idea to use a file name such as "John Jones Résumé" because it lets the reader know exactly what file he or she is opening and doesn't give away your working name. Kim Richmond, *Brand You*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 226. Avoid file names such as "Official Résumé," or "Résumé January 2010" as they don't include your name and are not professional.

Three Steps for a Cover Letter That Gets Noticed

If you haven't prepared a cover letter to send with your résumé, you should consider writing one. According to a recent article in the New York Times, "Cover letters are still necessary, and in a competitive market they can give you a serious edge if they are written and presented effectively." Phyllis Korkki, "A Cover Letter Is Not Expendable," New York Times, February 15, 2009, business section, 10. A cover letter is key if you need to set yourself apart, whether you are seeking an internship or a full-time position.

Step 1: Start with Your Three Brand Points

Maybe you are dreading the thought of writing a cover letter. It's easier than you think, since you have already identified your brand points. Write a summary statement for each of your three brand points. In other words, if you only had one minute to talk about your three brand points, what would you say about each one? Write two concise sentences for each point. It might be rough right now, but it will become the core of your cover letter.

Step 2: Understand the Elements of a Cover Letter

Now you just need to know how to structure your brand story to make it come alive for the reader. A cover letter has three major sections:

1. **First paragraph.** Introduction and purpose for your letter. Kim Richmond, *Brand You*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 162.
2. **Second paragraph.** Reasons why you will bring value to the company (this is where you include your brand points). Kim Richmond, *Brand You*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 162.
3. **Third paragraph.** Closing and follow-up. Kim Richmond, *Brand You*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 162.

Since business people skim cover letters and résumés, it's a good idea to use boldface to highlight your brand points. Kim Richmond, *Brand You*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 162. Take a look at the cover letter in Figure 2.4.10 to see how your brand points become the focus of your cover letter. It's important to *repeat* the highlights of your résumé in your cover letter so the reader can see at a glance how you can bring value as a prospective employee. Since you only have a few seconds to "sell" the reader on the fact that you are the right person for the job, you want to introduce the highlights in the cover letter and then provide the details in your résumé. Your cover letter and résumé work together to tell your brand story.

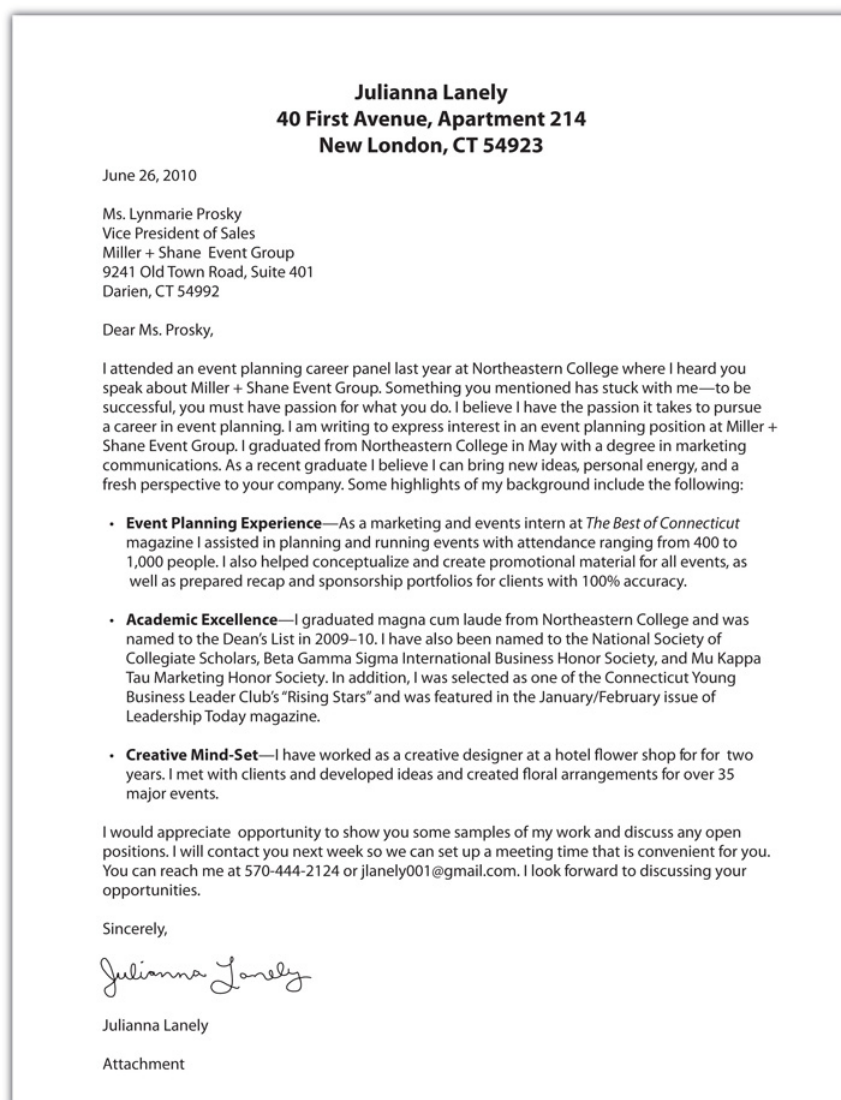


Figure 2.4.10: Effective Cover Letter

Besides the three core paragraphs of your cover letter, you will also want to know about the appropriate way to format a cover letter. Your cover letter should be limited to a single page and should include the same font that you used for your résumé. See Figure 2.4.11 for all the elements of a formal cover letter.

Julianna Lanely
40 First Avenue, Apartment 214
New London, CT 54923

Date of the letter.

June 26, 2010

Inside address: This is the name and address of the person to whom you are sending the letter. It should start with Mr. or Ms. and include his or her first and last name, job title, company name, address, city, state, and zip code.

Ms. Lynmarie Prosky
Vice President of Sales
Miller + Shane Event Group
9241 Old Town Road, Suite 401
Darien, CT 54992

Salutation: Includes "Dear," Mr. or Ms., and last name of the recipient.

Dear Ms. Prosky,

Second paragraph: Include a short summary of each of your brand points. Boldface for the introduction helps the reader skim your letter and see what you have to offer at a glance.

I attended an event planning career panel last year at Northeastern College where I heard you speak about Miller + Shane Event Group. Something you mentioned has stuck with me—to be successful, you must have passion for what you do. I believe I have the passion it takes to pursue a career in event planning. I am writing to express interest in an event planning position at Miller + Shane Event Group. I graduated from Northeastern College in May with a degree in marketing communications. As a recent graduate I believe I can bring new ideas, personal energy, and a fresh perspective to your company. Some highlights of my background include the following:

- **Event Planning Experience**—As a marketing and events intern at *The Best of Connecticut* magazine I assisted in planning and running events with attendance ranging from 400 to 1,000 people. I also helped conceptualize and create promotional material for all events, as well as prepared recap and sponsorship portfolios for clients with 100% accuracy.
- **Academic Excellence**—I graduated magna cum laude from Northeastern College and was named to the Dean's List in 2009–10. I have also been named to the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Beta Gamma Sigma International Business Honor Society, and Mu Kappa Tau Marketing Honor Society. In addition, I was selected as one of the Connecticut Young Business Leader Club's "Rising Stars" and was featured in the January/February issue of *Leadership Today* magazine.
- **Creative Mind-Set**—I have worked as a creative designer at a hotel flower shop for for two years. I met with clients and developed ideas and created floral arrangements for over 35 major events.

I would appreciate opportunity to show you some samples of my work and discuss any open positions. I will contact you next week so we can set up a meeting time that is convenient for you. You can reach me at 570-444-2124 or jlanely001@gmail.com. I look forward to discussing your opportunities.

Closing: It's best to use "Sincerely."

Sincerely,

Julianna Lanely
Julianna Lanely

Attachment

Attachment: For a hard copy, this signals that there is an attachment to the letter (your résumé).

Return address: Your name and address; this is similar to creating your personal letterhead. This should be at least 1 type size larger than the body of your letter.

First paragraph: Lead-in and introduction.

Third paragraph: Closing and call to action; note when you are going to follow up and include your contact information.

Figure 2.4.11: Elements of a Cover Letter

Step 3: Write Your Cover Letter

With your brand points in mind and the structure of a cover letter clearly defined, now you can get to writing. This is the place where you are able to demonstrate you personality and your selling skills. You can make your cover letter a powerful lead-in to your résumé and sell your prospective employer on the reasons why you should come in for an interview. As with your résumé, be sure to spell-check and proofread your cover letter carefully. Review your cover letter and résumé together to be sure your brand story is clear and powerful. Look at Rakeem Bateman's cover letter and résumé together in Figure 2.4.12 to see how the two documents can work together and really set you apart just at a glance.

Rakeem S. Bateman

3901 Western Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 54321

January 22, 2010

Mr. Jonathan Sikes
Director of Sales
Sorillos Foodservice Distribution
One Corporate Drive
Saint Paul, MN 54321

Dear Mr. Sikes,


I have an idea that will help you increase your sales. Does that sound like something that would be of interest to you?

I have a passion for creating solutions for customers and driving results for my customers and my company. I would like the opportunity to bring my skills to Sorillos Foodservice Distribution as an intern in your sales department. I have selling experience in addition to working toward my associate's degree in business administration at Tri-State Community College. Some of the highlights of my background include the following:

- **Sales Experience**—As an account management intern in the sales department at Recovery Systems, Inc., I participated in business development by doing research, generating and qualifying leads, and preparing PowerPoint and other presentation materials. I led the social networking efforts for the company and generated 30 new leads in 4 weeks by setting up and managing LinkedIn and Twitter accounts.
- **Leadership Skills**—As the president of the Green For Life student organization on campus, I provided leadership on community projects focused on sustainability. Our group raised \$2,300 to support local recycling efforts as a result of our "Go Green Now" campaign.
- **Work Ethic and Commitment**—I am focused and determined to succeed. I have held a full-time job while attending school. In addition, I have participated in community service efforts.

I would like the opportunity to meet with you in person and talk about how I can help you and Sorillos Foodservice Distribution achieve your goals. I will contact you next week so we can set up a meeting time that is convenient for you. You can reach me at 702-555-1234 or rakeemsbateman@gmail.com. I look forward to discussing how I can bring value to Sorillos Foodservice Distribution.

Sincerely,



Rakeem S. Bateman

Attachment

Rakeem S. Bateman

3901 Western Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 54321
Phone: 702-555-1234
rakeemsbateman@gmail.com
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/rakeemsbateman>

Objective	To obtain an internship in sales at a foodservice company.
Education	Tri-State Community College , Minneapolis, MN Associate's Degree, Business Administration, Expected 2010
Leadership Skills	Green For Life , Minneapolis, MN President, Student Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided leadership to 30-member student club that focuses on green initiatives in the community • Raised \$2,300 to support sustainability efforts with a community service campaign called "Go Green Now"
Sales Experience	Recovery Systems, Inc. , Minneapolis, MN Account Management Intern , Summer 2009 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted industry and client research for new business pitches for the \$300 million systems disaster recovery provider • Assisted with new business presentation preparation including PowerPoint slides, video, and scripting • Developed social media strategy to develop a community for existing customers and attract new customers, including a blog, LinkedIn profile, and Twitter account; strategy generated over 30 new leads • Provided weekly updates to 3 clients, including timelines and conference reports; created a new reporting dashboard that became the standard in the company for all client updates • Maintained budget and created reporting including graphs to easily communicate actual expenses compared to plan
	Olive Garden Restaurant , Minneapolis, MN

	Wait Staff , June 2007–Present <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided customer service to over 100 customers during each shift • Generated guest check average 8% higher than the restaurant average • Winner of “The Sweet Taste of Success” Sales Contest
Work Experience	Seymour and Jones Attorneys at Law , Land of Lakes, MN Administrative Assistant , Summers 2005–6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained schedules and expenses for office to support 5 lawyers
Computer Skills	Proficient in Microsoft Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Outlook, Camtasia and iMovie video editing

Figure 2.4.12: Sample Cover Letter and Sample Résumé

This cover letter can be the basis of the letter you use for most situations. Now that you have your cover letter, you should adapt it and personalize it for every situation. For example, if you are applying for a job that is posted online, adapt the letter to show how your brand points address the needs of the position. You may even want to create one or two new brand points that also define your brand that you can change based on the job posting.

It's best to use your cover letter whenever you send your résumé to someone, whether you are responding to a job posting, networking, or sending out letters to your target companies. The *Selling U* section in Chapter 8 includes several ways to get your cover letter and résumé out to prospective employers.

Key Takeaways

- Your **résumé** and **cover letter** are your “advertising” tools for your personal brand.
- There are five steps that help you write a résumé that stands out from the crowd.
 1. Your brand points are the basis of your résumé because they define your brand and the value you can bring to a prospective employer.
 2. You can choose a résumé format that is easy for the reader to skim and see your brand points.
 3. The headings on your résumé help provide a framework to tell your brand story.
 4. The bullet points under each entry on your résumé should focus on your accomplishments and achievements, not just a listing of job tasks.
 5. Always spell-check and proofread your résumé carefully. In fact, it's a good idea to have several people review your résumé for accuracy before you send it to prospective employers.
- Your résumé should always be sent with your cover letter. Your cover letter highlights your brand points, which are further reinforced in your résumé.
- A cover letter contains three major parts: the first paragraph that acts as an introduction, the second paragraph that highlights the value you can bring to the company, and the third paragraph that is the closing.

? Exercise 2.4.1

1. Visit your campus career center and learn about different formats for your résumé. Which ones do you like? Why? Which one will you use? Is it easy for the reader to skim and see your brand story?
2. Visit your campus career center and learn about the format for a cover letter. What elements are included in a formal cover letter, which are not included in a casual e-mail?

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