

# ENACTUS BCIT: ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE CIVILIAN WORK FORCE



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
INSTITUTE OF  
TECHNOLOGY

ENACTUS

BCIT.CA/LEGION





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Purpose and acknowledgments</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How it all works</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Part 1: How to create a resume and cover letter</b>	<b>5</b>
Step 1: Skills inventory	5
Step 2: Choose resume style and create your resume	10
The chronological resume	11
The functional resume	14
The combination resume	18
Resume components explained	22
Step 3: Create a cover letter	28
Cover letter template	29
Cover letter example	30
General tips in creating a cover letter and resume	31
Online submissions procedures	31
<b>Part 2: Interviewing and professional skills preparedness</b>	<b>33</b>
Step 1: How would you describe your personality?	33
Step 2: How can you begin to assess your own personality?	33
Step 3: How to make a lasting first impression – interviewing skills	38
<b>Part 3: The job search</b>	<b>40</b>
Step 1: How to find the hidden job market	40
Step 2: How to manage your online profile	42
Step 3: Informational interviews	43
Step 4: Networking	44
<b>References</b>	<b>46</b>



## **PURPOSE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The purpose of this book is to aid current and former Canadian Forces members translate their work experience into civilian equivalencies. The project is a partnership between Enactus BCIT and the BCIT School of Business.

A special THANK YOU goes out to the individuals who have made this book possible.

### **BCIT COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT**

Jean Scribner  
Program Head

Linda Pashka  
Instructor

### **BCIT SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

Natalie Condrashoff  
Program Manager

### **CANADIAN FORCES MEMBERS**

Second Lieutenant Ricardo Manmohan

Sergeant Michael Woolley

Corporal Dale Friesen

### **Enactus MEMBERS**

Johanna Hreich  
Project Manager

Jessica Agur  
President

Shirley Andriesh

Meghan Mclaughlin

Stephanie Chapman

Lindsay Noyes

Sophia Coulter

Jessica Olive

### **BCIT STUDENTS**

Nadia Kasenda

Anita Chau

### **INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS**

Maureen Molsberry  
Human Resources Manager,  
Ballard Power Systems Inc.

## HOW IT ALL WORKS

By successfully completing the following, you should have all you need to find a job in the civilian job market.

### **PART 1 – HOW TO CREATE A RESUME AND COVER LETTER**

Step 1: Skills inventory

Step 2: Choose resume template and create resume

Step 3: Create cover letter

### **PART 2 – INTERVIEWING AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS PREPAREDNESS**

Step 1: Personality profile

Step 2: How to make a lasting first impression

### **PART 3 – THE JOB SEARCH**

Part 4: How to find the hidden job market

Part 5: How to manage your online profile.





## PART 1: HOW TO CREATE A RESUME AND COVER LETTER.

In order to write a proper resume, you must first identify your skill set, and what you have to offer future employers. This section allows you to identify those skills; once complete, writing up the resume becomes easier. The next section will walk you through the process of writing your resume and cover letter.

### STEP 1: SKILLS INVENTORY<sup>1</sup>

To get ready to put together your resume you must first assemble, as completely as possible, a list of your transferable skills. You won't include all of these skills in your final resume. They form a master list from which you will select and order relevant details for a job specific resume.

Employers in knowledge fields are convinced most by a resume that presents a person with a set of skills suited to the duties of the advertised position – not just a generic list of what the person has done.

Compiling a complete and accurate list of your abilities takes time and thought. Once you have that list, you can choose from it, in response to each different job advertisement, to prepare a persuasive resume, shaped to show how you fit the specific position advertised.

The skills inventory below asks you what you can do, in order to determine what you have to offer to the position. Some of the skills you list might seem unrelated to your career. You might later decide not to include them, but you might also decide that they are transferable skills – skills that were acquired in one context but that can be applied in another.

For example, you might not think that a summer job operating the Corkscrew at the PNE is relevant to your career, but that summer job taught you to co-ordinate duties with a partner, serve the public courteously, maintain composure and control when faced with long line-ups of riders, ensure the safety of all riders, etc. Or, you might not think a black belt in karate has anything to do with your career. Those years of training, however, built discipline, dedication, loyalty, perseverance, and a variety of other skills in you, almost all of which are desirable in an employee.

1. Answer the questions in the inventory in detail.
2. Show your inventory to a person in the class who knows you best, and ask her/him to add to your inventory (add skills or add evidence).
3. How do you prove that you have the skill?
  - > Quantify it
  - > Provide an anecdote
  - > Describe methods/process
  - > Offer a statement of theory/philosophy
  - > Show them, role play, and through a test
  - > Testimonials
4. Check ALL of the items below that you have some level of competency at beyond what the average high school graduate possesses.
5. Write at least one specific example (the time, the place, the people, etc.) beside EACH skill you check, demonstrating that you have the skill. You're doing this for two reasons:
  - > to put the skill on your resume if it's relevant to the job you're targeting
  - > to prepare to answer interview questions about the skill area, if you're asked to.

---

<sup>1</sup> Pashka, L. (2010). Job Application Package Preparation: An Inventory of your Skills.

KIND OF SKILL	SPECIFIC PROOF THAT YOU HAVE THE SKILL (Where and when you acquired it, how you developed it, how you demonstrated it)
<b>A. MANUAL/MECHANICAL</b>	
Designing	
Repairing	
Assembling	
Operating	
Other	
<b>B. TECHNOLOGICAL/INFORMATION MANAGEMENT</b>	
Wordprocessing	
Spreadsheet	
Graphics	
Presentation software	
Multimedia	
E-mail protocols	
Internet research	
Website design (here or Section E)	
Website management	
Other	
<b>C. CUSTOMER/CLIENT/COMMUNITY SERVICE</b>	
Serving	
Lifesaving	
Other	
<b>D. OUTDOOR/ATHLETIC</b>	
Team sports (recreational or competitive)	

Individual sports (recreational or competitive)	
Racquet sports	
Martial arts	
Weight training	
Other	

#### **E. CREATIVE**

Acting, dance	
Music (appreciation or playing)	
Writing/designing/composing	
Visual arts (drawing, filmmaking, website design [here or Section B], painting, sculpture, etc.)	
Commercial art/advertising	
Other	

#### **F. INVESTIGATIVE/ANALYTICAL**

Information gathering/research	
Interviewing	
Investigating	
Classifying, analysing, evaluating	
Other	

#### **G. EDUCATIONAL**

Instructing, training, coaching	
---------------------------------	--

#### **H. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT**

Initiating events or projects	
Leading groups or teams	
Inspiring and motivating	

Making decisions	
Setting goals, foreseeing future needs	
Managing a budget	
Keeping accurate financial records	
Recruiting, hiring, promoting staff	
Supervising	
Other	

**I. ORGANIZATION, CRITICAL THINKING**

Problem solving	
Self-direction	
Scheduling	
Designing projects or programs	
Planning, developing, prioritizing	
Keeping track of details	
Working to deadlines	
Working under pressure	
Multi-tasking	
Other	

**J. COMMUNICATION/PEOPLE**

Team building, team participation	
Developing rapport	
Listening	
Resolving conflicts	



Negotiating	
Mediating	
Treating others fairly	
Persuading	
Counselling	
Inspiring trust	
Marketing	
Fundraising	
Preparing written documents	
Presenting information orally	
Using courteous telephone skills	
Chairing/facilitating meetings	
Taking Minutes in meetings	
Other	

**K. OTHER**


## STEP 2: CHOOSE RESUME STYLE AND CREATE YOUR RESUME.

When creating your resume, you have to understand which format works best for you. There are three: chronological, functional or combination. Each have their own purpose and over time you may have to change the type of resume you need based on the experiences you gain and what your career goals are. The following discusses the differences between the resume styles and templates are also provided. In addition to the templates, there are subsections which discuss in further detail the sections required in a resume.

### The Chronological Resume<sup>2</sup>

This format allows individuals to present their most current accomplishments under headings that highlight their job titles, places of employment and dates of employment in reverse chronological order.

This format is best for individuals who:

- > Want to remain in the same field or industry they are currently employed.
- > Have had a lot of lateral or vertical career growths (i.e. promotional opportunities gained or increases in job responsibility) making their current objective the next step in their career path.
- > No gaps in their employment history; as in, they were consecutively employed, or job titles that indicate they were doing something productive during their employment gaps.

The following is a template of what a typical Chronological Resume format should look like. Under each heading are suggestions as to what information under each section should entail. In addition to an example resume presented chronologically to show what the final product should look like.



<sup>2</sup> Step 3: Choose a resume format– Chronological, Functional, Combination. Last modified 2010, <http://susanireland.com/resume/how-to-write/format/>

Address

Name

**Job Objective**

The job you want.

**Summary of Qualifications** (at least one of these or all three if possible)

- > One line that sums up the total number of years experience you have.
- > One line that sums up your education.
- > One line that sums up your most important or marketable skills, such as IT skills, languages, special certificates.

**Awards and Decorations**

- > Any awards you have received in the past. Not necessarily military related.

**Work Experience**



- > Job title (1) Year (start to end date)
  - > Company name / city
  - > Skills and responsibilities you had in this position.
  - > A problem you solved and the results you achieved.
  - > A time when your actions positively affected an outcome of the organization or your boss/coworkers and/or even customers.
  - > Anything that relates to your job objective and shows you are good for this line of work should be stated in this section. Further examples include:
    - > Awards, commendations, publications, etc.
    - > Projects
    - > Measurable results that demonstrate your skill variety
- > Job Title (2) Year (start to end date)
  - > Company name / city
- > Job Title (3) Year (start to end date)
  - > Company name / city
  - > Etc.

**Education**

- > Level of education and year/date achieved (e.g.: degree, diploma, high school)
- > Institution's name and location.

**Skills**

- > What are some baseline skills that you possess that were not mentioned within your work experience?
- > Examples are computer skills, languages, administrative skill, and managerial skills.

**Activities**

- > Things that allow the employer to get to know you on personal level. Teams you are a part of, subjects of interest, and/or hobbies.

**References available upon request**



3 Chronological Resume Template. Last modified 2010, <http://susanireland.com/resume/how-to-write/format/chronological-template/>

## CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME EXAMPLE

### John Smith

788.808.5242 • johnsmith@hotmail.com

---

#### JOB OBJECTIVE

Obtain the position of, Sky Train Attendant (Part-time Temporary) within the British Columbia Rapid Transit Company.

#### SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- > Have various experiences in dealing with mechanical/electrical fault correction, training operations, emergency response, and maintaining security and welfare for everyone involved.
- > Ability to work in fast-paced, high stress situations and maintain professionalism in view of the public and that of my peers and superiors.

#### AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

- > Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal
- > North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Medal Former Yugoslavia

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

- > **Grounds Machinery Operator** April 2009 – November 2008  
Golf Resort
  - > Monitor and secure work facilities.
  - > Ensured operations ran smoothly.
  - > Responded to customer inquiries regarding.
  - > Communicate effectively to internal and external operators.
  - > Apply and administer regulations in the workplace.
- > **Corporal** October 1999 – January 2008
  - > Canadian Armed Forces (Primary Reserves)
  - > Plan road movements involving multiple vehicles and ensured good communication and safety for all involved.
  - > Supervise groups of 8-10 individuals and help them work effectively and safely through training.
  - > Select qualified personnel to accomplish high stress tasks for specialized jobs.
  - > Delegate and supervise coworkers to the completion of tasks in order to achieve management.
  - > Write in-depth incident reports concerning security and individual welfare.
  - > Gather information for analysis.
  - > Identify persons or vehicles of interest that enter area of responsibility.
  - > Interview locals in foreign countries about their concerns and welfare and relaying that information to superiors in a timely manner.
  - > Respond to customer inquiries regarding health and safety.
  - > Support locals in foreign countries, while communicating the actions of the Canadian Forces to protect their country.
- > **Fabricator** November 2004 – June 2005  
Avant Garde Signs Ltd.
  - > Handle consumer complaints in a timely and professional manner while fostering continuous collaboration.
  - > Create designs through use of visual media.
  - > Realign products in stores in accordance with company marketing plans.

## **VOLUNTEER HISTORY**

- > **Advocate** June 2010 – Present  
Students in Free Enterprise – British Columbia Institute of Technology
  - > Promote community projects through social media.
  - > Advise students on how to expand the Legion Military Skills Conversion project at BCIT.
- > **Vice President** June 2005 – June 2007  
Surrey Disk Sports Association
  - > Developed fund raisers to generate finances and ensure continued growth of league.
  - > Provided motivation and support for team members.
- > **Receiver** December 2005  
Operation Shoebox – Salvation Army
  - > Ensured the donations were organized and accounted for.
  - > Raised awareness of the operation through social media.

## **EDUCATION**

- > Emergency Medical Responder Certification January 2007  
Justice Institute of British Columbia – New Westminster Campus, BC
- > Major in Geographical Studies September 1999 – May 2002  
Simon Fraser University – Burnaby, BC

## **SKILLS**

- > Able to coordinate groups of 8-10 individuals to achieve a common goal.
- > Takes the initiative to complete tasks on time.
- > Works well as a team and individually.
- > Adaptable to constantly changing environments.
- > Honest and reliable.
- > Patient in dealing with communication barriers.
- > Able to effectively multitask in order to cut down on company costs.

## **ACTIVITIES**

- > Training for half-marathons
- > Ultimate Frisbee – Maple Ridge Disc Sports Association
- > Mountain biking – recreational

## **REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**



## THE FUNCTIONAL RESUME<sup>4</sup>

Allows individuals to use skill headings to emphasize their achievements by their relevance and impact. Work history is therefore placed towards the bottom of the resume.

The functional format is meant for those who:

- > Are making extreme career changes – meaning their work history is not relevant to the current jobs they are seeking.
- > Have gaps in their employment history which are tough to explain or have had too many jobs in a short period of time. Essentially things that an individual would like to avoid emphasizing in their resume that may pose as a “red flag” to the employer.
- > Don’t have impressive or relevant recent positions that would attract a prospective employer.
- > Have experiences, but they were long ago – functionality would emphasize on the skills acquired and not the date of employment.

The following is a template of a typical Functional Resume. Under each heading are suggestions as to what information under each section should entail. In addition to an example of a functional resume to show what the final product should look like.



<sup>4</sup> Step 3: Choose a resume format– Chronological, Functional, Combination. Last modified 2010, <http://susanireland.com/resume/how-to-write/format/>



Address

NAME

E-Mail

**JOB OBJECTIVE**

The job you want.

**SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**

- > One line that sums up the total number of year experience you have.
- > One line that sums up your education.
- > One line that sums up your most important or marketable skills, such as IT skills, languages, special certificates.

**AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**


Any awards you have received in the past. Not necessarily military related.

**SKILLS**

- > What are some baseline skills that you possess that were not mentioned within your work experience?
- > Examples are computer skills, languages, administrative skill, and managerial skills.

**RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

- > Major type of skill (i.e.: management, supervisory, administrative, leadership)
  - > Responsibility or action you took show you have the skill
  - > A problem you solved using this skill and the results
  - > A time when you used your skill to positively affect the organization, or your boss/coworkers and or even customers.
  - > Anything else that relates to your job objective and shows that you possess the skill would be stated in this section. Further examples include:
    - > Awards, commendations, publications, etc.
    - > Projects
    - > Measurable results that demonstrate your skill variety



You can state the military skills acquired that relate to the job (e.g. leadership, communication, etc.)

**WORK HISTORY**

List jobs in descending order in the following manner

- > Job title (1), company name and city Year (start to end date)
- > Job title (2), company name and city Year (start to end date)
- > Job title (3), company name and city Year (start to end date)
- > Etc.

**EDUCATION**

- > Level of education achieved (e.g.: degree, diploma, high school) – institution’s name, location and years.

**ACTIVITIES**

- > Things that allow the employer to get to know you a personal level. Teams you are a part of, subjects of interest, and/or hobbies.

**REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**



Perfectly OK to state this, but be ready to give a copy of your references when asked.

5 Functional Resume Template. Last modified 2010, <http://susanireland.com/resume/how-to-write/format/functional-template/>

## FUNCTIONAL RESUME EXAMPLE

### John Smith

788.808.5242 • johnsmith@hotmail.com

---

#### JOB OBJECTIVE

- > Obtain the position of Sky Train Attendant (Part-time Temporary) within the British Columbia Rapid Transit Company.

#### SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- > Have various experiences in dealing with mechanical/electrical fault correction, training operations, emergency response, and maintaining security and welfare for everyone involved.
- > Ability to work in fast-paced, high stress situations and maintain professionalism in view of the public and that of my peers and superiors.

#### AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

- > Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal
- > North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Medal Former Yugoslavia

#### SKILLS

- > Able to coordinate groups of 8-10 individuals to achieve a common goal.
- > Takes the initiative to complete tasks on time.
- > Works well as a team and individually.
- > Adaptable to constantly changing environments.
- > Honest and reliable.
- > Patient in dealing with communication barriers.
- > Able to effectively multitask in order to cut down on company costs.

#### RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

##### Investigative/Analytical

While serving in the Canadian Army and attending Simon Fraser University, I acquired the necessary skills to:

- > Write in-depth incident reports concerning security and individual welfare.
- > Gather information for analysis.
- > Monitor and secure work facilities.
- > Identify persons or vehicles of interest that enter area of responsibility.
- > Interview locals in foreign counties about their concerns and welfare and relaying that information to superiors in a timely manner.

##### Leadership/Management

During my time in the Canadian Army, I gained the ability to:

- > Plan road movements involving multiple vehicles and ensured good communication and safety for all involved.
- > Supervise groups of 8-10 individuals and help them work effectively and safely through training.
- > Select qualified personnel to accomplish high stress tasks for specialized jobs.
- > Delegate and supervise coworkers to the completion of tasks in order to achieve management.

##### Customer Service

My volunteer experience and time in the Canadian Military allowed me to develop skills to effectively:

- > Handle consumer complaints in a timely and professional manner while fostering continuous collaboration.
- > Respond to customer inquiries regarding health and safety.
- > Support locals in foreign countries, while communicating the actions of the Canadian Forces to protect their country.

## WORK HISTORY

- > **Grounds Machinery Operator** April 2009 – November 2008  
Golf Resort
- > **Corporal** October 1999 – January 2008  
Canadian Armed Forces (Primary Reserves)
- > **Fabricator** November 2004 – June 2005  
Avant Garde Signs Ltd.

## VOLUNTEER HISTORY

- > **Advocate** June 2010 – Present  
Students in Free Enterprise – British Columbia Institute of Technology
- > **Vice President** June 2005 – June 2007  
Surrey Disk Sports Association
- > **Receiver** December 2005  
Operation Shoebox – Salvation Army

## EDUCATION

- > Emergency Medical Responder Certification January 2007  
Justice Institute of British Columbia – New Westminster Campus, BC
- > Major in Geographical Studies September 1999 – May 2002  
Simon Fraser University – Burnaby, BC

## ACTIVITIES

- > Training for half marathons
- > Ultimate Frisbee – Maple Ridge Disc Sports Association.
- > Mountain biking – recreational

## REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

## THE COMBINATION RESUME<sup>6</sup>

Emphasizes an individual's work history and relevant skills. This format uses a chronological approach in presenting work history. The skills become subheadings which are used to categorize achievement under each job title/employer.

This format is most effective for individuals seeking to:

- > Make a career change, thus wanting to highlight their transferable skills.
- > Advance in their current industry or field.
- > Accurately describe their level of responsibility since their job title does not accurately depict it.
- > Fill in gaps of employment with relevant volunteer experience to the job objective they desire.

The following is a template of what a typical Combination Resume should look like. Under each heading are suggestions as to what information under each section should entail. In addition to an example of a functional resume to show what the final product should look like.



<sup>6</sup> Step 3: Choose a resume format– Chronological, Functional, Combination. Last modified 2010, <http://susanireland.com/resume/how-to-write/format/>

Address

Name

Phone Number  
E-Mail

**JOB OBJECTIVE**

The job you want.

**SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**

- > One line that sums up the total number of year experience you have.
- > One line that sums up your education.
- > One line that sums up your most important or marketable skills, such as IT skills, languages, special certificates.

**AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

- > Any awards you have received in the past. Not necessarily military related.

**SKILLS**

- > What are some baseline skills that you possess that were not mentioned within your work experience?
- > Examples are computer skills, languages, administrative skill, and managerial skills.

**WORK HISTORY**

- > List jobs in descending order in the following manner
- > Job title (1), company name and city

Year (start to end date)

**Major Skill**

- > Provide evidence:
  - > An accomplishment from this job, which shows you have this skill.
  - > A problem you solved using this skill and the results.
  - > A project from this job you are proud of that used this skill and supports your job objective.

Major skills refers to focused skill sets acquired in a position. (i.e. categories found in the skills inventory)

**Major Skill**

- > Provide evidence
  - > Job title (2), company name and city

Year (start to end date)

**Major Skill**

- > Provide evidence
  - > Job title (3), company name and city
  - > List duties, responsibilities and results of the job
  - > Quantifiable results that point out your skill
  - > Role within the organization
  - > Projects that you worked on that supported the organizational objective
  - > Etc.

Categorization is not always required when not enough evidence to support possession of a particular skill.

Year (start to end date)

**EDUCATION**

- > Level of education achieved (e.g.: Degree, Diploma, High School) – Institution’s name, location and years/date.

**ACTIVITIES**

- > Things that allow the employer to get to know you a personal level. Teams you are a part of, subjects of interest, and/or hobbies.

**REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

Perfectly OK to state this, but be ready to give a copy of your references when asked.

## John Smith

788.808.5242 • johnsmith@hotmail.com

---

### JOB OBJECTIVE

Obtain the position of, Sky Train Attendant (Part-time Temporary) within the British Columbia Rapid Transit Company.

### SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- > Have various experiences in dealing with mechanical/electrical fault correction, training operations, emergency response, and maintaining security and welfare for everyone involved.
- > Ability to work in fast-paced, high stress situations and maintain professionalism in view of the public and that of my peers and superiors.

### AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

- > Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal
- > North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Medal Former Yugoslavia

### SKILLS

- > Able to coordinate groups of 8-10 individuals to achieve a common goal.
- > Takes the initiative to complete tasks on time.
- > Works well as a team and individually.
- > Adaptable to constantly changing environments.
- > Honest and reliable.
- > Patient in dealing with communication barriers.
- > Able to effectively multitask in order to cut down on company costs.

### WORK EXPERIENCE

#### Grounds Machinery Operator

April 2008 – November 2010

Golf Resort

- > Manual/Mechanical.
- > Monitor and secure work facilities.
- > Ensured operations ran smoothly.
- > Responded to customer inquiries regarding.
- > Communicate effectively to internal and external operators.
- > Apply and administer regulations in the workplace.

#### Corporal (Canadian Armed Forces (Primary Reserves)

October 1999 – January 2008

Investigative/Analytical

- > Write in-depth incident reports concerning security and individual welfare.
- > Gather information for analysis.
- > Monitor and secure work facilities.
- > Identify persons or vehicles of interest that enter area of responsibility.
- > Interview locals in foreign counties about their concerns and welfare and relaying that information to superiors in a timely manner.



## LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT

During my time in the Canadian Army, I gained the ability to:

- > Plan road movements involving multiple vehicles and ensured good communication and safety for all involved.
- > Supervise groups of 8-10 individuals and help them work effectively and safely through training.
- > Select qualified personnel to accomplish high stress tasks for specialized jobs.
- > Delegate and supervise coworkers to the completion of tasks in order to achieve management.
- > Support locals in foreign countries, while communicating the actions of the Canadian Forces to protect their country.

### **Fabricator**

November 2004 – June 2005

Avant Garde Signs Ltd.

- > Handle consumer complaints in a timely and professional manner while fostering continuous collaboration.
- > Create designs through use of visual media.
- > Realign products in stores in accordance with company marketing plans.

## VOLUNTEER HISTORY

### **Advocate**

June 2010 – Present

Students in Free Enterprise – British Columbia Institute of Technology

- > Promote community projects through social media.
- > Advise students on how to expand the Legion Military Skills Conversion project at BCIT.

### **Vice President**

June 2005 – June 2007

Surrey Disk Sports Association

- > Developed fund raisers to generate finances and ensure continued growth of league.
- > Provided motivation and support for team members.

### **Receiver**

December 2005

Operation Shoebox – Salvation Army

- > Ensured the donations were organized and accounted for.
- > Raised awareness of the operation through social media.

## EDUCATION

> Emergency Medical Responder Certification  
Justice Institute of British Columbia – New Westminster Campus, BC

January 2007”

> Major in Geographical Studies  
Simon Fraser University – Burnaby, BC

September 1999 – May 2002

## ACTIVITIES

- > Training for half marathons
- > Ultimate Frisbee – Maple Ridge Disc Sports Association.
- > Mountain biking – recreational

**\*REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

## RESUME COMPONENTS EXPLAINED

The following goes through each section, explains its purpose and what to include.

### Summary of Experiences: Military

Basic ranks and what each level has in regards to training – levels build on each other.

#### Private

- > Communication skills – verbal
- > Following direction well
- > Technical knowledge (basic)
- > Basic Military Law
- > Teamwork
- > Supervised

#### Corporal

- > Communication–Electronic (radios)
- > Technical knowledge (apprentice)
- > Works with minimal supervision
- > Basic leadership training (prep)

#### Master Corporal

- > Communication – written (basic)
- > Mastery of all basic skills
- > Instructing
- > Mentor
- > Conflict management
- > More military law and inter-nation law/treaties/code of conduct
- > Responsible for soldiers in combat zone (if deployed)
- > Planning small activities
- > File reports
- > Discipline soldiers

#### Sergeant

- > Communicating with higher level of command and in-depth written.
- > Advanced instructing.
- > Leading solders in variety of tasks.
- > Disciplining (recommendation for official charges).
- > Advising to higher management.
- > Managing of finances and resources on small scale during planning.
- > Working performance evaluator.

## SUMMARY OF SKILLS ACQUIRED THROUGH THE MILITARY

The higher the rank, the more the individual is expected to display the following skills. This list provides a base for individuals to recall and use while thinking of the skill they learned during their CF career.

### Leadership

1. Supervising
  - > Directing the work of subordinates.
  - > Setting and enforcing standards and ensuring completion of work.
  - > Maintaining discipline by ensuring subordinates comply with CF policies, regulations, and orders.
  - > Knowing subordinates and promoting their welfare.

2. Evaluating and developing subordinates
  - > Providing continuous feedback for development.
  - > Conducting PDR interviews with subordinates.
  - > Providing opportunities for improvement.
  - > Encouraging and guiding professional development of subordinates.
  - > Judging subordinates' performance and potential.
3. Team building
  - > Understanding the unique capabilities of each team person and employing them appropriately.
  - > Promoting cooperation and group cohesion.
4. Leading change
  - > Being receptive to change.
  - > Communicating change to subordinates.
  - > Participating in the change process.
  - > Implementing change initiatives.

## **PERSONAL ABILITIES**

5. Working with others
  - > Respecting others.
  - > Contributing to team performance and supporting team goals.
  - > Willingness to use appropriate interpersonal conflict resolution methods including Alternative Dispute Resolution.
6. Problem-solving
  - > Evaluating and interpreting information.
  - > Generating solutions and plans.
  - > Willingness to consider innovative solutions.
7. Decision-making
  - > Selecting an appropriate course of action.
  - > Taking calculated risks.
  - > Taking action.
8. Effectiveness under demanding circumstances
  - > Performing effectively under intense, adverse, or dangerous conditions.
9. Initiative
  - > With minimal or no direction, taking appropriate action.
  - > Being a self-starter.

## **COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

10. Verbal communication
  - > Speaking in different settings.
  - > Understanding and interpreting verbal orders, information, advice and feedback.
11. Written communication
  - > Content and quality of writing.

## **PROFESSIONAL ABILITIES**

12. Applying job knowledge and skills
  - > Performing duties and tasks in accordance with applicable NCM, officer, and MOS specifications.

13. Resources management

- > Understanding logistical systems and administration and applying this knowledge.
- > Ensuring security and the safe use of resources.
- > Using resources economically and efficiently.

14. Accountability

- > Acceptance of areas of responsibility.
- > Being answerable for personal decision and actions and for the decision and action of subordinates.

15. Reliability

- > Dependability, consistency, timeliness, quantity, and quality of work.

16. Ethics and values

- > Perform work in an ethical manner.
- > Lead in an ethical manner.
- > Reflect, at a minimum, the CF's ethical values and integrity, loyalty, courage, honesty, fairness and responsibility.

17. Conduct on and off duty

- > Behaving in accordance with the CF policies, regulations and orders, and civilian law.



## SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCES

### Work

Work experience is based on the past jobs that you have held. Both civilian and military positions are to be highlighted here. Listing your work experience and what you gained in each position, will allow you to narrow down what position you find suitable to put on your resume.

Position	Skills Acquired
Company	
Year	
Duties	

Position	Skills Acquired
Company	
Year	
Duties	

Position	Skills Acquired
Company	
Year	
Duties	

Position	Skills Acquired
Company	
Year	
Duties	

Position	Skills Acquired
Company	
Year	
Duties	

Position	Skills Acquired
Company	
Year	
Duties	

## Education<sup>8</sup>

When it comes to writing down your education, on your resume, be sure to include basic details:

- > name and location of school,
- > graduation date,
- > credential achieved (degree, diploma, certificate),
- > awards received
- > relevant accomplishments you would like the employer to know.

Keep in mind you want to impress the employer, therefore, write the information in the order you would like it to be emphasized. If you graduated from a well-known school, then write that first, followed by your achievement at the institute.

Some individuals who stop going to school or quit their programs feel that the experience they have gained cannot be advertised; this may be an incorrect assumption. You can list the school you attended and the program you were in; however, in your cover letter be sure to state the reason for the career change. Not acknowledging and explaining your reason will lead the employer to draw a potentially false conclusion about you. Now if you dropped several programs, do not list them all – this will give the wrong impression, that you don't finish what you start.

Only include high school if you do not have post-secondary education. Include awards and achievements that you attained. Also be sure to state if you attended any special training programs or seminars, and acquired special designations and certifications – include dates.

## Activities<sup>9</sup>

This section describes who you are outside of work. Individuals generally have a hard time figuring out what exactly to include in this section. Essentially, anything that describes or gives the employer an idea of who you are outside of the workplace. This section gives them a glimpse of your personality and accomplishments; this is your chance to impress them even more. Here are a few tips and example to consider when filling out this section of your resume.

Make sure to include a combination of at least three activities and interests. Show one physical fitness, one mental fitness, one teamwork, and one creative item.

- > Hockey (or any sport, recreationally or competitively)
- > Linguistics (languages you speak, or are learning)
- > Traveling (i.e. backpacking across Europe)
- > Triathlon training
- > Kayaking (long distance adventures) lead guide
- > Cooking classes (gourmet)

Activities and interests that are included should be items that not everyone can claim involvement in. They should have some sort of skill required or level of discipline needed to complete. Examples include long distance adventure kayaking trips and triathlon training, both require training and discipline to succeed, which not everyone has the motivation to complete.

Be as specific as possible about level of expertise and/or qualifications. (i.e. During the kayaking trips I was the lead guide. I was responsible for navigating a group of ten people through treacherous water ways). By quantifying your accomplishments, it gives the employer more of a specific idea about your capabilities instead of leaving them to generalize and assume what you are capable of.

Avoid items that show you to be overly social such as:

- > Going clubbing
- > Winning a beer chugging contest in college
- > Gossiping.

---

8 Pashka. L. (2010). COMM 2200 – Business Communications 2. Winter 2010.

9 Pashka. L. (2010). COMM 2200 – Business Communications 2. Winter 2010.



Just as important, do not include activities that have no real relevance or interest to the employer such as:

- > Knitting scarves with my grandmother
- > Playing solitaire on my computer
- > Walking my dog.

This section, should impress your employer, or at least show them that you're a dedicated and disciplined individual, so be sure to put items that highlight your personality.

### References<sup>10</sup>

The most important question to ask is “Who should I ask to be a reference?”. The answer is that you want to select individuals who will back up what you have stated in your resume. This means, for example, your previous managers [commanding officers] peers, subordinates, or professors. If you have stated something in your resume that can be validated by one of the individuals, notify them, so they can confirm the details when talking with the employer. If you do not have any work experience, then you can use professors as references.

Having a minimum of three references is the average and should give the employer enough opportunity to validate what you have told them in the interview. The list of references should be attached to the last page of your resume upon request.

When listing your references be sure to give the following information:

- > Full name
- > Job title, organization name
- > Phone number – best time to call
- > Relationship to you (eg. Worked together for five years)

### Note

- > The references are not included in the two page limit of your resume.
- > When creating the references page, be sure to use the same formatting you have used to create your resume, so that it has a consistent flow once you attach it.



### **STEP 3: CREATE A COVER LETTER<sup>11</sup>**

A cover letter is like a mini story about you. It's an opportunity to make an impact, and intrigue the employer to look at your resume and maybe even contact you.

There are six key things to address when writing your cover letter: who, what, where, when, why, and how.

#### **Who?**

Who are you writing to? And who are you? Find out who will be looking at your resume and potentially contacting you for an interview – doing so, shows professionalism and effort. Using classics such as, “To whom this may concern” is too generic and indicates a rushed or lazy application. Also, introduce yourself and showcase your personality – in a professional manner.

Make sure you know and understand the employer you are applying to. Generic cover letters are transparent and will not stand out. Tailor each cover letter to the position and employer you are applying to. Illustrate that you know what the company does and how you would be a great addition to what they offer.

#### **What?**

What are you applying for? Unless you're cold calling the company, you know what position you're applying for so be sure to state it. Title your document with the position you're applying for and reference the job application number if available.

#### **Where?**

Where are you? Are you in the same city as the job, or are you planning on moving? This is important in terms of them contacting you and setting an expectation that you will be willing to relocate for the job.

When? When are you available to start work? Are you waiting to graduate? Are you leaving another job? State when you're available to be contacted; don't say anytime if you're not available at all times.

#### **Why?**

Why do you want this job? Why should they pick you? Explain your reasoning – is it because your qualification fit the job perfectly, or is it your dream job? If you don't have work experience that directly qualifies you for the position you are applying for, be sure to list the skills you have learned in your past work experiences that indirectly qualify you for the job. List any achievements or awards you have received that backup the skills you possess.

#### **How?**

How should your cover letter look? A template of how your cover letter should look is on the following page.

---

<sup>11</sup> Cover Letters: Getting It Right, last modified 2009, <http://www.vault.com/wps/portal/usa/vcm/detail/Career-Advice/Cover-Letter-Advice/Cover-Letters:-Getting-it-Right?id=196>

## COVER LETTER TEMPLATE<sup>12</sup>

Your name  
Your address  
Your city, Province, Postal Code  
Your phone number  
Your e-mail address

Date

Employer contact information  
Name  
Title  
Company  
Address  
City, Province, Postal Code

Salutation (i.e.: Dear Mr. /Ms. Last Name)

### **Job Title (Application Number)**

#### **First Paragraph:**

Capture the employer's attention with a strong opening. State what you're applying for, and if you are excited about the position, make sure that shines through in your writing. If someone has referred you (i.e. company employee or mutual friend) state their name. Convince the reader that you have what it takes for the job so they want to contact you. This ideally is two to three sentences.

#### **Middle Paragraphs:**

What is the firm looking for? And what do you have to offer the firm? Discuss how your past experiences and achievement have given you what they need and are looking for. State your strengths and the various skills you possess and then note your personal qualities that show you can successfully complete the job. Do not cut and paste from your resume, instead discuss the highlights. Each time you make a statement, support it with evidence.

#### **Final Paragraph:**

Thank the employer for taking your application under consideration. Restate your strong interest for the position you want. Then state that you are looking forward to the opportunity to meet with them in person and give your contact information.

**Complimentary Close:** (i.e. Sincerely)

**Signature:** Handwritten for mailed letter and typed for e-mails.

## COVER LETTER EXAMPLE

**John Smith**

788.808.5242

johnsmith@hotmail.com

January 18th, 2011

British Columbia Rapid Transit Company

6800 14 Avenue.

Burnaby, BC. V3N 4S7

**Attention – Human Resources**

### **Sky Train Attendant (Part-time Temporary)**

I am extremely interested in the position of SkyTrain Attendant as advertised on the British Columbia Rapid Transit Company website. I would like the opportunity to prove that I have the skills and experience to provide the superior customer service that SkyTrain users have come to expect.

While I was a member of the Canadian Armed Forces I provided a secure, safe working and living environment for people both in Canada and while on overseas deployments. I successfully provided assistance and service to people from many different backgrounds, religions and from all standards of living; as Greater Vancouver is a multicultural area this expertise which would be useful in Greater Vancouver's multicultural environment. Additionally, as a member of a grounds crew for two Top-rated BC golf courses I used my skills to improve customer satisfaction and develop good customer relations. I also have experience working with different emergency service and police personnel and am adept at communicating with and cooperating with these professionals.

I am confident my teamwork skills, as well as my first aid and emergency situation training will be a benefit to the SkyTrain team. My ability to work independently, finish tasks, take directions from higher qualified personnel and follow instructions in order to meet deadlines for task completion, would make me an excellent Sky Train Attendant. I look forward to discussing this career opportunity and further demonstrating the skills I may offer to BCRTC. I am available for contact anytime at 788.808.5242 or via e-mail at **johnsmith@hotmail.com** and would be available to meet for an interview at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Mr. John Smith

## GENERAL TIPS IN CREATING A COVER LETTER AND RESUME<sup>13</sup>

The purpose of a resume and cover letter is to get an interview. You have to show the employer a highlight reel of yourself that they can scan in two pages. What knowledge, skills, and abilities to do you have to offer them?

Please note that for each resume, if you are applying to various industries or jobs, be sure to tailor the resume to the specifications of that job posting. Look at key points in the job posting and see if you have what they are looking for. If you have the qualifications they are asking for, be sure to make them stand out.

Here are a few tips on what to do and not do, while formulating your resume

- > Speak to what the job requirements are, when responding to a posting.
- > Keep your cover letter to one page maximum and your resume to a two page maximum.
- > Don't over use the word "I", your resume is all about you.
- > Use a non-serif font, meaning fonts such as Arial, Arial Narrow and Calibri; these fonts are easier on the eyes when employers are scanning through a resume; also they are less likely to smudge when the resume is being faxed. Serif fonts include: Times New Roman, Cambria and Georgia; these are appropriate when writing business documents, but not for resumes.
- > Use 11 or 12 point font. Any bigger or smaller would hinder the ease of read.
- > Run spell check, it is easy to overlook a simple mistake that could easily be corrected with this application. Companies tend to reject applications with spelling mistakes.
- > Send your resume in PDF format unless otherwise stated.
- > Avoid use of generic resume templates if you want to stand out.
- > Don't ever lie on your resume.
- > Use strong actions words to gain the employers attention.
- > Don't include personal details on your resume such as your physical appearance, birthday, marital status, sex, ethnicity, health, social security number or pictures. Employers are not allowed to discriminate based on these characteristics, so don't give them the opportunity to.

### Online submissions procedures

Online submission can be a daunting process, yet most employers now require online submissions. Knowing how to do it effectively will get you once step closer to getting the interview.

Saving your resume in MS Word and Plain Text allows you to attach the MS Word document and paste the Plain Text version in the body of your e-mail. Having your resume in the body of your e-mail makes it convenient for the employer to scroll through your qualification and decide whether they want to open your attached resume or not. Also, some employers require an e-mailed cover letter as well as a resume – be sure to do the follow for your cover letter as well.

The following guides you through the process of formatting your resume for e-mail submissions.

### E-mail your resume

- > Carefully type in the employer's e-mail address.
- > Type "Resume:" followed by the job title you're seeking in the subject line. (e.g. Resume: Sky Train Attendant (Part-time Temporary))
- > Write a brief cover letter.
- > Paste the plain text of your resume, after the cover letter, and ensure the formatting is perfect.
- > Attach the hard copy of your resume.
- > Review the e-mail for any errors, and then send it.

In regard to converting your resume, writing a short cover letter, and attaching a hard copy, here are some instructions on how to do so.

### **Convert your resume to plain text**

- > Open your resume in MS Word
- > “Save As” your resume, and change the type of document to “Plain Text (\*.txt).”
- > Click OK and do not change anything when the File Conversion window appears.

### **Write a short cover letter**

- > A cover note is a quite introduction of yourself, and states why your e-mail and for what position.
- > Also state, that you have attached your resume and inserted a Plain Text version for their convenience.
- > It is important to keep the message brief, if they have asked for an e-mailed cover letter there is no point in reiterating all that is in your cover letter in the body of your e-mail. You will attach your cover letter for them to read it.

Dear Mr. McDonald,

My name is John Smith, and I am applying for the position of Sky Train Attendant (Part-time Temporary) within the British Columbia Rapid Transit Company.

Please review my resume, which follows. Having served in the Canadian Forces, my leadership, investigative and customer skills would be an asset to the company.

I look forward to discussing my qualifications in person and can be reached by cell phone at 604.123.4567, or by e-mail at johnsmith@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

John Smith.

### **STEP 3: ATTACH A HARD COPY RESUME**

- > Do not assume that all employers are using MS Word 2007. Ensure that you save your resume in an earlier version of MS Word so that the likelihood the employer can open your attachment is higher.
  - > “Save As” your resume, and pull down the Type menu to select “Word 97-2003” document.
  - > Your resume should then convert into a “.doc” file and be ready for sending.

If you're unsure about how your e-mail will appear to an Employer, you can always send a “test – run” e-mail to yourself. This ensures that your attachment and e-mail layout are how you would like them to appear to the employer are correct.



## PART 2: INTERVIEWING AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS PREPAREDNESS

This section is all about being prepared when going into an interview. Knowing your personality and what works for you can go a long way. Being able to articulate who you are will give the employer a better idea if you will suit the job you are applying for. In addition, there are more tips about general interview preparedness and what to do before, during and after the interview to make a lasting first impression.

### STEP 1: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONALITY?<sup>14</sup>

#### Why is it important to be able to describe your personality traits?

According to the BC Council of Business's most recent (2006) biennial skills and attributes survey report, BC's employers are looking for personality traits such as accountability, enthusiasm, a positive attitude, high standards, honesty, flexibility, and diligence in new employees.

Increasingly in Canada and the US, companies, especially mid-size to large ones, are resorting to creative methods to determine a candidate's personality qualities in a job interview. Sometimes, they give you a written personality "test;" more often, they design questions that will demonstrate your personality. More and more in the last few years, they are asking problem-solving, behavioural, and case questions. In an interview at Microsoft in the past five years, you might have been asked, "How would you move Mount Fuji?" or "How many quarters would it take to reach the top of the Empire State Building?"

See actual questions asked by Microsoft:

[sellsbrothers.com/fun/msiview/default.aspx?content=question.htm](http://sellsbrothers.com/fun/msiview/default.aspx?content=question.htm)

Interviewers ask questions like the "Mount Fuji" question for two reasons:

- > to hear where you place the emphasis in your description
- > to see how quickly and creatively you can think on the spot.

It's not about the right answer; it's about how you approach, analyze, and break down a problem.

Even before the interview, the people who assess your job application package (letter, resume, and any letters of reference) will be reading it to determine first that you have the levels of academic and practical experience they have specified. If you do, they will then read your package to get a sense of your other personal qualities, your personality type (PT).

### STEP 2: HOW CAN YOU BEGIN TO ASSESS YOUR OWN PERSONALITY?<sup>15</sup>

You can use any of a number of tools in combination to determine your personality type and describe yourself.

Two popular tools are

- > "personality type indicators" such as Meyers-Briggs (MBTI) that gives you a four-letter code, one of a possible 16 personality types (E/I+N/S+T/F+J/P).
- > your conflict management style: avoider, accommodator, compromiser, collaborator, competitor.

Some people round out their description considering other factors such as their

- > learning style.
- > birth order position (others consider this area still not "proven").
- > team role style.

Still other people use simpler, more fun ways to describe themselves:

- > Favourite colour (one book takes nine colours and links your personality to your choice as favourite: red=extraversion, orange=less intense extraversion, yellow=radiance and intellect, green=balance, blue=tranquillity, purple=introspection, brown=sensibleness, white=innocence, black=bravery).
- > Favourite shape (the theory of psycho geometrics divides personality types into five types, each with a dominant and secondary characteristic, according to the preference for one of five geometric shapes).

---

<sup>14</sup> Pashka. L. (2010). COMM 2200 – Business Communications 2. Winter 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Pashka. L. (2010). COMM 2200 – Business Communications 2. Winter 2010.

Here's a quick route to your four-letter (MBTI) personality type:  
[humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp](http://humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp)

An introduction to conflict management styles:  
[webhome.idirect.com/~kehamilt/ipsyconstyle.html](http://webhome.idirect.com/~kehamilt/ipsyconstyle.html)

Brief information about the effect of birth order position on personality:  
[encouragingleadership.com/Birth\\_Order.htm](http://encouragingleadership.com/Birth_Order.htm)

A quick guide to the kind of occupation you might be suited for based on your PT:  
[doi.gov/octc/typescar.html](http://doi.gov/octc/typescar.html)

Or, you might define yourself as part of Generation X, Y, or Z.



**EXERCISE**

For use in both your written job application package and future job interviews, answer the following:

In a paragraph of 25–50 words, how would you describe your personality?

---

---

---

---

What 10 adjectives would you use to describe yourself?

---

---

---

---

What are 10 adjectives would your friends use to describe you?

---

---

---

---

Which of the above adjectives, if any, would the people who have worked with you in the past delete? Which would they add?

---

---

---

---

What is the greatest compliment you could receive?

---

What is the greatest compliment you've ever received?

---

What is the greatest compliment you could give?

---

What is the greatest compliment you've ever given?

---

Describe a time when you did the following:

> improved processes at your place of work/school (what exactly did you do, when, what was the result)?

---

---

---

> did not perform up to your own expectations (what exactly happened, when, how did you deal with it)?

---

---

---

> were required to change something you were not willing to change (what exactly was it, why were you required to change it, why were you unwilling to change it, what exactly did you do to change it, what was the result)?

---

---

---

> resolved a conflict successfully at work/school (what exactly happened, what was the result)?

---

---

---

> did not successfully resolve a conflict at work/school (what exactly happened, what was the result)?

---

---

---

What are your three greatest strengths as an employee?

---

---

---

What are your three greatest weaknesses as an employee?

---

---

---

Explain why you think a business/organization should hire you (30 seconds to say).

---

---

---



## STEP 3: HOW TO MAKE A LASTING FIRST IMPRESSION – INTERVIEWING SKILLS<sup>16</sup>

### Preparing for the Interview

The following information will be useful in making an impression on a potential employer, but first and foremost you must be aware of what the company does and what exactly you are applying for. Make sure you spend a little time doing your research on the company prior to the interview. Look for information about the company's history or background, what it is they do exactly, what you are expected to do for the company and general information regarding the company's mission, vision, goals or anything else you may find to be useful. The more information you have the better you can prepare for the interview and match your training, experiences and education with the required duties, responsibilities, knowledge and skills for the position. Throughout the interview this preparation will be very helpful as you will have a better understanding of what the employer is looking for in your responses to questions and you too can better understand how well you fit with the company.

Be on time! Know where you're going in advance and plan your route. Go early if you can to ensure nothing prevents you from making it to the interview on time. Being late for an interview does not create a good first impression and could have a dramatic impact on your success in the interview. If possible, arrive 10 minutes before your interview time; any more, and you will be subjecting yourself to extra stress and anxiety waiting; any less and you risk the employer getting the wrong impression of you.

### First Impressions

First impressions are critical. There are five things to remember when making a first impression.

- > Shake hands with the interviewer in a firm, friendly way. Firm handshakes show confidence.
- > Smile – it will ease the tension.
- > Make eye contact with the interviewer. Make it natural, it's not a staring competition.
- > Use the interviewer's name. It shows you have the ability to listen, and decreases the chance you will forget it later.
- > Express pleasure in meeting the interviewer. Keep it simple and appropriate (eg. "It's a pleasure to meet you".)

If you feel like you did not leave a good first impression, don't let it bring you down. You still have the rest of the time to show them how great you are. Also if you tend to get nervous meeting people you don't know, practice with people you do know. The more you practice the more natural it will become.

### Appearance

When considering what to wear to the interview, keep in mind it is always better to be slightly overdressed than under dressed. This does not mean you should rent a tuxedo for the interview, but think critically about what the work environment is like and consider how the manager or supervisor would be dressed and gauge your outfit accordingly. For example, if the work environment is business casual, wearing a suit and tie to an interview is expected, but if you are applying for a construction position the suit should be left at home. For trades jobs especially, you may be asked to demonstrate your skills in the interview, so you should dress appropriately to be able to do so. It would be best to wear clothing which allow for movement to an interview where you may be asked to demonstrate your trade skill; however, ensure they are well clean and free from wrinkles, stains and inappropriate logos or wording.

Consider your own appearance as well. For any interview, regardless of the position or industry, you should prepare yourself by bathing, shaving (for men), wearing deodorant, brushing hair and styling conservatively, and wearing appropriate make-up (for women) and keep it natural looking. Be mindful of scents as well many people can be sensitive to smells you should not wear anything that is fragrant, avoid perfumes and aftershave or cologne, and do not smoke at least one hour prior to the interview.

During the interview you are encouraged to do the following six things that will enhance your interview experience:

- > Show confidence. Being shy and reserved won't show them your personality.
- > Use manners – basics such as not interrupting the interviewer.
- > Appear calm and comfortable. If you're nervous, you probably won't give the best answers to the questions because your nerves will hinder you.
- > Make eye contact with the interviewer. Natural eye contact show you are listening and acknowledging the interviewer.
- > Hold proper posture. No slouching; proper posture gives off professionalism.
- > Keep body control, without fidgeting or distracting mannerisms.

---

<sup>16</sup> Pashka, L.(2010). COMM 2200 –Business Communications 2. Winter 2010.



## Respond to questions

Make sure you are clear in what you are saying and what you are trying to convey to the interviewer. Be conscious of your “ums” and “ahs” as these can be incredibly distracting for the interviewer who may end up missing critical points in your response. This demonstrates a lack of confidence making it appear that you are unprepared. Also, while using swear words and politically incorrect jargon may be acceptable in the military, it is defiantly not acceptable in most civilian workplaces or an interview. Be mindful of the individuals you are speaking to, as to not offend them.

Listen effectively, so that you can formulate a response to questions – take your time and don't rush, and try to answer the questions to the best of your ability. It is often a good idea to bring a pen and paper to the interview to jot down key points in a question, especially in lengthy questions which may ask for you to respond to a specific scenario. This will help you ensure you get all the points across that you need to through your response. However, this does not mean you should take several minutes to formulate your response. This time period should be only a few seconds as it is meant to allow you to organize what you are going to say in your mind before responding, not as a mechanism for stalling.

If you do not understand a question, you may ask for clarification or for further information before responding. This question will not be looked at as a bad thing; just don't do this for every question because then it may appear that you were unprepared for the interview and are searching for the answers from the interviewer.

A well known method to answering interview question is the “STAR” criteria. When interviewers want to know more about you, they will ask you behavioural and scenario questions. When given these questions, if you follow the STAR method, your answer will be in-depth and complete. STAR is an acronym that stands for Situation or Task, Action, Results.

**Situation or Task:** Being a situation that you were in or a task you had to accomplish. Be sure to describe a specific even or situation. Don't generalize your answer because interviewers don't care for generalizations, they need details to get an accurate assessment. The situation or task can be from previous work experience or other relevant events in your life.

**Action:** Refers to the action and the steps you took during the situation or task. If you're describing a situation where a group of people were involved, make sure to keep the focus on your role and on what you did; and don't talk about what you might have done, tell the interviewer what you did do. The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour, so if you did something impressive make sure to state it.

**Results:** What was the outcome? And what did you learn?

By using the STAR method it allows you to effectively answer the interviewer's questions. It also shows that you know how to answer questions thoughtfully and thoroughly.

## Closing impression

At the end of the interview you will likely be asked if you have any questions. Ask for the opportunity to summarize qualifications or add information, if necessary. The question period also a perfect time to show how well you have prepared for the interview by having some questions made up in advance. Prepare a couple of questions about the company or job to show your preparation and interest in the company. You can also ask for more information about the position you applied for.

Once you have asked all your questions, make sure to thank the interviewer for meeting with you and express your interest in hearing from him/her soon. You may ask when a decision is likely to be made and when you can expect to hear from the interviewer. Shake their hand as you did in the beginning of the interview, smile, make eye contact, use their name and express positive anticipation about your next contact with them.

On a side note, knowing the day they plan to call or that you can call helps you to be ready to take/make that call. If you did not arrange to call the interviewer and you have not heard from the interviewer after two weeks, you can call to find out where he/she is in the hiring process. If you are not the successful candidate you may ask the interviewer what would have made you the successful candidate. This information will help you with future interviews. Again, thank the interviewer for his/her consideration and time.

## PART 3: THE JOB SEARCH

Once you have completed Parts 2 and 3, you're now ready to start looking for a job. This section gives advice on how to find the hidden job market, manage your online profile, and conduct informational interviews.

### STEP 1: HOW TO FIND THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

Today, there are many options available that are convenient and easy to access when it comes time to look for a new position. Most companies post positions online via job search engines or targeted sites where they think people with the skill and ability will look. Two of the largest and most popular options for job search engines include Monster.ca and Workopolis.ca. Both of these websites usually work with specific employers (commonly larger sized organizations or recruitment agencies working on behalf of smaller companies or those that wish to remain anonymous). Often companies will post multiple positions available within their company or add a link to the careers section of their website. If you are interested in working for a larger company, these are good resources to take advantage of.

#### Benefits

One of the benefits of using these websites is that they allow you to post your resume online for employers to view. This gives you the opportunity to be considered for positions you might not have otherwise applied to. It could be a field you did not know much about previously, or a position you did not think you were qualified for. Either way, this feature helps maximize your job search potential by getting as many people as possible to view your resume.

Both websites allow you to search for specific positions and/or industries (for example, if you want to do marketing for a technology company, you can search specifically for marketing jobs in that industry), as well as narrow down where you would like to work and what type of position (full-time, part-time, contract, etc.).

#### Monster.ca

Monster.ca provides a career benchmarking tool to see how your earnings compare to peers in the similar positions. This may be useful to see what you could expect to earn if you are seeking out a specific position. They also provide resume writing services (for a fee) and a number of articles on providing career advice including job hunt strategies, interviewing tips, how to write a good resume, and how to plan your career development.

#### Workopolis.ca

Workopolis.ca offers a number of blog entries on current news and tips for job seekers, along with resume writing and networking tips, and advice on how to stay motivated and ace an interview. They also have a section on helpful books for job seekers and a tool that allows you to search out education and training options in your area.

#### Craigslist

Another option for job seeking is Craigslist. Many smaller organizations or companies who may just be hiring for one or two positions will post on Craigslist. It is no longer just for entry level or low paying positions. On average, the positions posted on Craigslist require lower levels of experience than jobs posted on Monster or Workopolis, which can be good if you have not had directly related work experience to the position. However, more of the companies posting on Craigslist are smaller organizations which may not have as many opportunities for advancement. Craigslist has a simple search function; you just click on the field you are interested in working in (for example, human resources). Then you can search for keywords, but overall the search is not nearly as specific as the search functions on Monster and Workopolis. To maximize your potential, it is important to use multiple services to actively search for available positions.

**Note:** If you know what trade you would like to work in, doing a job search on a professional/trade association website may increase the validity of your search. Some examples would be: T-Net Employment, British Columbia Automobile Association, and British Columbia Electrical Association.

## eJobs at BCIT

eJobs is another very useful service to take advantage of.

How to sign up

- > Go to [bcit.ca/ses/ejobs](http://bcit.ca/ses/ejobs) and click on “Register or Login”
- > Click on “registration” and select “Student/Alumni” registration
- > Enter your student ID
- > Fill out the form
- > You can request to have e-mails sent to you if there are any job positions in the field or industry you are interested in. This is useful as it allows you to see jobs as soon as they are posted instead of having to constantly check the system to see if there are new jobs.

Once the form has been filled out, you can access the student/alumni login.

eJobs is an incredibly useful tool as the majority of employers who post are actively seeking BCIT students and are looking for people with the type of skills BCIT provides its students. This means that many of the jobs will also be more tailored to the level of experience expected from a new post-secondary grad. eJobs also allows you to post your resume and select which categories of employers you would like your resume to be visible to.

## Tips on avoiding scams

Given our day and age, it is not unlikely to find job opportunities that turn out to be scams. This is why it is very important to do company research before going for an interview. Sites like Craigslist, have lots of job opportunities, however since there is no regulation on what is being posted, scams may be posted and you may fall for them. Some general tips to avoid scams are

- > Never give money, a bank debit card or credit card to a prospective employer or employment agency.
- > Do not pay any fee, commission or advance money for a job or for job materials.
- > Be suspicious of any employment or service firm that promises to get you a job.
- > Do not go alone to an interview you are feeling uneasy about, or one that is to take place in an isolated location or in the evening. Take a friend.
- > Research your prospective employer. Check with the Better Business Bureau to verify legitimacy.
- > Report any problems with interviews of jobs that don't seem to be legitimate.
- > Be very cautious of job offers or promises that seem to be too good to be true. They almost always are. Ask for the written employment agreement, and read it carefully. If verbal promises are made that do not appear in the contract, think twice about accepting employment.
- > Leave an interview quickly if the interviewer asks inappropriate questions (i.e. questions about your marital status, dating preferences, your religion or financial contacts).
  - > In Canada, this information is protected by law and is not relevant to the job, and should not be used to determine your employability. Prospective employers can use information that is public information to determine your employability (i.e. banks will check your credit rating).
- > It is illegal for employers to require you to purchase uniforms, badges, protective clothing or supplies from them exclusively.
  - > Employers can require you to follow a dress code or purchase safety equipment. They can offer discounts or incentives for you to make the purchase from them, but you have the right to buy from other companies that meet the employer's specifications. Companies can supply uniforms and require their employees to wear them.

These tips were retrieved directly off of the BCIT eJobs website. For more information please visit [bcit.ca/ejobs](http://bcit.ca/ejobs).

## STEP 2: HOW TO MANAGE YOUR ONLINE PROFILE

It is becoming more and more important for people in all occupations to have a positive online profile. This means that when someone types your name into a search engine like Google, the image and text results that come up serve to enhance the public opinion of you. There are several ways that a person can do this using one or several online tools.

### Facebook (facebook.com)

You may be familiar with stories of people getting fired or penalized at work for what they posted on Facebook. When using a social media tool like this, you need to decide if you want to self-censor and only post on topics you would be comfortable with anyone seeing, or if you want to utilize your Facebook privacy settings so that your profile is not available to the public.

If you want to keep your profile visible to the public, be aware of what you are posting. Before posting anything, or tagging yourself in a photo, think about whether you would share this with a co-worker. If not, it's probably a good idea not to post it.

A great alternative to this is to utilize your privacy settings. For example did you know you could categorize your friends into groups and only make some postings available to them? You can also modify your search visibility so that when searched on Google or even within Facebook you do not show up. Visit [allfacebook.com/facebook-privacy-2009-02](http://allfacebook.com/facebook-privacy-2009-02) for more information on how to do this.

### Twitter (twitter.com)

Twitter is a microblog website where users can follow friends or businesses and be followed by the same. They have privacy settings similar to Facebook, but it is important to self-monitor because they are still vulnerable to a security breach by a third party. With Twitter, you cannot be sure that someone will not pass on one of your private posts.

### LinkedIn (linkedin.com)

LinkedIn is a professional network similar to Facebook. You can post your professional and educational background as well as pictures and status updates; as well as, search for people in a similar field and make great networking connections. Your LinkedIn profile will also appear first in a Google search for your name. Regardless of your profession, if you do not have a LinkedIn account you should, because senior management in most companies do and this is a great way to keep your name top of their mind.



When using any social media site, it is important to know that, in most cases, the content is owned by the platform. So, Facebook owns anything you post on Facebook. Even if you delete a post, it is still on their server, and therefore still available to the public. Always think about who could potentially see something and how it may be perceived before you post it.

### **STEP 3: INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS<sup>17</sup>**

An informational interview is a meeting between someone who wants to gain knowledge/connections and someone who already has a job in the field or organization that you're interested in. You can do it by calling up your organization of interest and requesting that someone meets with you for an informational interview.

#### **Why do it?**

- > Networking and mentorship, exploring role/company/industry knowledge and careers.
- > Keep in mind that an informational interview is NOT a job interview. Main objective is NOT to get hired!

#### **Appropriate time to conduct interview**

- > Before work, after work, during lunch/coffee breaks, and the duration of the informational interview typically ranges from 15-30 minutes.

#### **Appropriate setting**

- > At the person's office (especially if interested in the work environment), or at a nearby coffee shop or cafeteria.
- > Always choose the option that maximizes time, is convenient, and is comfortable!

#### **Dress code and materials to bring**

- > Dress code (research the company's dress code – match or exceed).
- > Appropriate items to bring pens, notepad, business cards, portfolio and resume.

#### **Info interview questions to ask/not ask**

##### **Don't ask<sup>18</sup>**

- > Questions that could easily have been answered from research.
- > About a specific job position that they are actively trying to fill.
- > Personal questions or questions that breach company confidentiality.

##### **Do ask<sup>19</sup>**

The question will vary due to the availability of information online and the information you seek. Some examples of things to ask are:

- > Career advice.
- > Company background, hiring structure, future opportunities.
- > Their education/work experience.
- > Others they can connect you with.

#### **Conduct follow-up**

- > Thank your Interviewee by e-mail immediately and hard copy thank you card within two days.
- > Keep business cards organized and safe.
- > Keep in touch through LinkedIn, or by e-mailing activity updates every three to six months.

---

<sup>17</sup> Step to preparing for an informational interview. (2011). Best-career-match.com. retrieved from: <http://www.best-career-match.com/informational-interview-prep.html>

<sup>18</sup> Quintessential Careers. (2011). Retrieved from: [http://www.quintcareers.com/information\\_job.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/information_job.html)

<sup>19</sup> Job Search Strategies (2011). University of Manitoba. Retrieved from: [http://www.umanitoba.ca/student/employment/media/job\\_search\\_workbook.pdf](http://www.umanitoba.ca/student/employment/media/job_search_workbook.pdf)



## STEP 4: NETWORKING<sup>20</sup>

It has been stated that about 80% of jobs nowadays are acquired through networking. Therefore, here are a few basic strategies to help you learn how to network. The following information was provided by Sue Clement during her seminar at BCIT, titled “How to Network Like a Pro”.

### Strategy #1: Networking is a life skill, not a sales skill

This means that networking can happen on a daily basis wherever you go – it’s a way of being. It’s all about making connections, building relationship and being of service to others. It’s not about asking for a job directly, it’s about building that relationship with the individual so that when a job comes up, they have you in mind because they know you and your interests.

### Strategy #2: Become a great listener

You learn what the other person has to offer, by listening to them – not by only talking about yourself. By listening you may find common interests, or even something impressive that they have done in which you can engage into the conversation more. By keeping up-to-date with the news and industry associations you are interested in, you can have meaningful conversations that will generate discussions and let your personality shine.



20 Strategies to Network Like a Pro. (2010). retrieved from: [www.sueclement.com](http://www.sueclement.com)



### Strategy #3: Embrace networking opportunities

While at networking events, here are some tips to help ease nerves.

- > Keep a positive attitude. If you go into an event thinking it's going to be horrible, your pessimism will make you leave the event thinking it was horrible and vice versa.
- > Set a goal of the number of contacts to make. If you are a goal oriented person, this will drive you to approach and connect with individuals to meet your personal goals.
- > Have a meaningful self-introduction. Stating that you are just a student is too generic, therefore state your career goal so to make yourself stand out.
- > Host mentality. Pretend you are the Host for the event and you would like to know who has showed up. Do so will give you the confidence to approach and engage individuals.
- > Tag team. If you shy to go alone to an event, go with a friend that way you can circulate the room faster while finding the individuals of interest to you or your friend and introduce each other.

### Strategy #4: Become a resource

The more people you connect with, the more likely you may find a resource that will help you get a job. When building relationships, don't be shy to ask for help and offer connections or assistance to others that is how connections grow.

### Strategy #5: Networking is a contact sport

When at an event, you may collect several business cards. To keep track of the individuals and to have a point of reference when contacting them again, write down what you talked about on the card as to not confuse the individuals and the conversations had. Follow up with the contacts and provide them with useful information about yourself, and what you are involved in that they may be interested in; doing so will keep the connection alive and keep you at the forefront when job posting come up.



## REFERENCES

**Cover Letters: Getting It Right, last modified 2009**

[vault.com/wps/portal/usa/vcm/detail/Career-Advice/Cover-Letter-Advice/Cover-Letters:-Getting-it-Right?id=196](http://vault.com/wps/portal/usa/vcm/detail/Career-Advice/Cover-Letter-Advice/Cover-Letters:-Getting-it-Right?id=196)

**Cover Letter Format. Last updated 2011**

[jobsearch.about.com/od/coverlettersamples/a/coverformat.htm](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverlettersamples/a/coverformat.htm)

Student Employment Services. BCIT 2011. Sample Cover Letter PDF.

**Chronological Resume Template. Last modified 2010**

[susanireland.com/resume/how-to-write/format/chronological-template/](http://susanireland.com/resume/how-to-write/format/chronological-template/)

**Functional Resume Template. Last modified 2010**

[susanireland.com/resume/how-to-write/format/functional-template/](http://susanireland.com/resume/how-to-write/format/functional-template/)

**Step 3: Choose a resume format – Chronological, Functional, Combination. Last modified 2010**

[susanireland.com/resume/how-to-write/format/](http://susanireland.com/resume/how-to-write/format/)

**Combination Resume Template. Last modified 2010**

[susanireland.com/resume/how-to-write/format/combination-template/](http://susanireland.com/resume/how-to-write/format/combination-template/)

**How to E-mail Your Resume. Last modified 2011**

[susanireland.com/resume/online/email/](http://susanireland.com/resume/online/email/)

**Job Search Strategies (2011). University of Manitoba.**

Retrieved from [umanitoba.ca/student/employment/media/job\\_search\\_workbook.pdf](http://umanitoba.ca/student/employment/media/job_search_workbook.pdf)

**7 Step to preparing for an informational interview. (2011).**

Best-career-match.com. retrieved from [best-career-match.com/informational-interview-prep.html](http://best-career-match.com/informational-interview-prep.html)



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

3700 WILLINGDON AVENUE  
BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA  
CANADA, V5G 3H2

[bcit.ca/legion](http://bcit.ca/legion)

