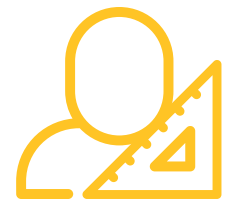
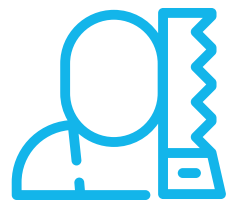


KellyDirect[®]



talent **toolbox**



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Introduction

You are ready to move up. You have the skills, the experience, and the drive to take that next step in your career. All you need now is the right opportunity.

The question is, how do you distinguish yourself from everyone else?

This toolbox will show you how.

In this toolbox, you will find everything you need to build a stellar résumé that will get you noticed. You will also find a template to craft a great cover letter, the blueprints on what to expect during the interview process, how to impress interviewers, how to assemble an appropriate post-interview follow-up, and what to do once you have secured your new opportunity.

It is everything you need to stand out from the crowd and secure that next step in your career path.

About KellyDirect®

KellyDirect specializes in placing talented employees in direct-hire positions with companies across most fields and disciplines. With a vast network of industry contacts, we always know what employers are looking to fill immediate full-time positions. We offer the most direct route to the hard-to-find full-time jobs.

Professionals looking for full-time positions, career stability and growth, and benefits from day one, trust KellyDirect to get their résumés past the job boards and direct to the top companies.



The importance of making that first impression

You already know how critical it is to make a first impression in any setting, especially a professional one. Your résumé is the first impression you will make on a potential employer. That means that the content, organization, and appearance of your résumé will speak for you and determine whether you will be invited to interview.

Given how important it is to make this first impression, take the time to carefully craft a powerful résumé that reflects your professional accomplishments, experience, business savvy, and strengths.

When crafting your résumé, make sure to abide by these do's and don'ts:

Do:

- **Develop a positioning statement** – Instead of an objective statement, begin your résumé with a *positioning statement* that describes what you have to offer. Start off a résumé with something that makes a very strong first impression. For example, “Highly accomplished Marketing Executive with more than 10 years experience developing multi-million dollar product lines.”
- **Make your résumé easy to follow** – Create easy-to-follow categories such as Professional Experience, Education, Certifications, and Associations.
- **Keep things relevant** – List your professional experience for the past 10 years.
- **Include a brief company description** – Provide a brief company description for each company you have been employed with. Include company size, industry, and any notables about the company.
- **Summarize key responsibilities** – Make sure your résumé does not read like a job description. Less is more here.
- **Focus on accomplishments, not daily tasks** – When describing your professional experience, highlight your accomplishments with the use of concise bullet points that are easy to read.
- **Make results and accomplishments specific and measurable** – “Increased yearly profits” will not mean much to anyone. On the other hand, “Developed new direct mail campaign resulting in more than \$4 million in yearly sales” speaks volumes about your abilities and the result is measurable.
- **Use actions words** – Strong action words (e.g., developed, designed, championed, initiated, established, executed, managed, organized) promote a dynamic, powerful individual.
- **List education, certifications, and associations last** – These are important, but not more so than your accomplishments, experience, skills, and talent.
- **Limit your page count** – Limit content to two pages using basic fonts of 10 – 12 points on white or off-white paper.
- **Create a text-only résumé** – Have this ready for employers who need your résumé in this version.



Laying the foundation: a stellar résumé

Do not:

- **Include irrelevant information** – Personal descriptions and hobbies are nice, but they will not get you the job. Focus on professional accomplishments. It is not necessary to include “References Available Upon Request.”
- **Use lingo** – Avoid the use of company and/or industry-specific terminology and acronyms. These may cause confusion, and that can get you screened out. Your prospective employer needs to understand what your duties were. This also helps to ensure your experience can translate into a new position.
- **Refer to negative information** – Never communicate negatively about a former employer. There is no need to include reasons for leaving your last job or previous salaries.
- **Use personal pronouns** – Avoid “I” and “me.” Instead of “I accomplished a 40 percent increase in sales in August of 2007,” simply start off with “Accomplished...”
- **Be dishonest** – Honesty is still the best policy! Make sure your employment dates, job titles, accomplishments, and experience are accurate to the best of your knowledge. Nothing takes you out of the running faster than false or misstated information.
- **Allow typos or grammatical errors** – Even the smallest mistake on a résumé can hurt your chances. Read your résumé and read it again, and then have a trusted friend review it for unnoticed mistakes.
- **Use long paragraphs to describe experience** – Keep your descriptions short, and use bullet points to streamline your writing where possible.
- **List just tasks and duties** – Focus on accomplishments and provide details and numbers specific to those accomplishments.
- **Make your résumé difficult to read** – Do not use multiple fonts, font sizes, or complicated formatting. Keep it clean, simple, and professional.
- **Include copies of transcripts, letters of recommendations, or awards** – If the interviewer wants any of these, they will ask for them in an interview. Do not attach them to your résumé.
- **Use poor quality paper or staples** – Remember, it is all about first impressions. Use high quality résumé paper. Stay away from color paper, background graphics, and staples.



Sample résumé one: Chronological

Alicia Wilson

515 Main Street
 East Lansing, MI 48823
 Phone: (517) 555-4444
 E-mail: awilson@hotmail.com

Summary of Qualifications

Experienced management professional specializing in financial analysis, planning, and budgeting. Demonstrated expertise in and dedication to developing innovative process improvements that positively affect company profitability with a consistent and documented record of creating positive organizational enhancements.

Representative Accomplishments

- Deep knowledge of asset management/wealth-development built through six years of business experience
- Created and implemented strategic planning and analysis process resulting in more than 200 enhancements to client organization
- Reduced labor costs by average of \$500 per month by cutting two days off monthly close schedule
- Commended by CFO for developing model for long-term forecast of accounts payable payments to determine cash requirements and timing of bank borrowing

Professional Experience

Portfolio Planning, Inc. – A publicly held Capital Management Company

Senior Financial Manager 2005 – Present

Co-managed \$5 – 10 million in domestic equities for private individuals. Selected securities, valued portfolios, traded equities, and built personal customer relationships. Developed valuation models and analytical framework for the equity management service. Major accomplishments include:

- Allocated and oversaw \$50 million in corporate cash for a large public company – helped to build and maintain the relationship for more than 3 years
- Analyzed more than a hundred companies across various industries using traditional financial statement analysis, qualitative analysis, break-up, and comparative valuation methods
- Won contract offering investment services through 14 branches of a local bank
- Developed a rapidly growing brokerage clientele of 275 accounts – products included mutual funds, stocks, bonds, individual and company retirement plans, insurance, and annuities

Interactive Investing, Inc. – Management Consulting and Registered Commodity Trading Firm

Database Manager 1999 – 2005

Provided customized analysis, software, charting, and data for Fortune 500 clients. Major accomplishments include:

- Expanded proprietary database to include numerous unique data sets, particularly in the cash commodity markets
- Created twenty new and innovative products to meet specific customer needs
- Secured new client relationships that resulted in 3.5 million in new business



Education

Master of Business Administration in Finance 2004
Michigan State University, Lansing, Michigan

Bachelors of Business Administration in Finance 1999
University of Detroit Mercy, Detroit, Michigan

Affiliations & Memberships

Board of Directors – Abacus Education Foundation

- Responsible for organizing and managing monthly and yearly financial records

Fundraising Committee Chair – Midwest Entrepreneurial Foundation

- Raised donation in excess of \$75,000
- Organized and managed fundraising efforts



Sample résumé two: Functional

JASON MOORE

5432 Kingsfield Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46268

Home: 317-871-1436 Cell: 317-871-4829

jason_moore@jobsearch.com

QUALIFICATIONS

- Executive-level, strategic marketing, and product development professional in the financial services industry
- Advanced strategic marketing and promotions
- Extensive direct-to-consumer and business-to-business experience
- P&L management
- Online and traditional product development
- Budget administration
- Recognized leadership and teambuilding

EXPERIENCE

Strategic Marketing

Significant accomplishments include:

- Development and execution of vertical industry strategy resulting in annual division revenue increases of 38%
- Work directly with CEO to develop strategic marketing plan and determine corporate direction
- Increased year over year sales for 2007 by 34% through new lead generation campaign
- Increased annual customer retention rates by 16%
- Increased depth of online product offerings, resulting in new account growth averaging 37% per year
- Led insurance investment group through intensive overhaul of sales and marketing approach that increased penetration into personal investing by 20% and division revenue by 23% in 2007
- Improved online lead generation activity by 9,500 active leads each month
- Generated \$41 million in annual organic growth with \$500,000 marketing investment through client focused lead generation, advertising, and promotion efforts
- Motivated teams to regularly exceed targets and financial forecasts
- Led expansion efforts by identifying and capitalizing profitable markets—increased branch coverage by 25%
- Leveraged CRM data to develop models to identify customers at greatest risk of decline, developed and implemented strategies to help retain key customers, resulting in consistent double-digit year over year growth for this segment



New Product Development

Significant accomplishments include:

- New product development resulting in more than \$200 million in additional yearly revenue
- Introduced more than 50 enhancements to existing online product resulting in 200% more repeat visitors to consumer web site
- Established formalized product life cycle management approach, resulting in 10% year over year growth in niche markets
- Generated comprehensive product plans to address challenges and exploit opportunities identified in product review
- Developed premium account product for high-volume clients, which increased account penetration by 46% in the financial services market
- Developed and introduced specialty product for the business-to-business market which drove an additional contribution of \$80 million in the first year
- Enhanced existing offline products for the consumer market, improving margin by 24%

EMPLOYERS

Interactive Investing, Inc., Indianapolis, IN

A publicly held Fortune 500 investment firm with 200 locations worldwide
 Vice President of Marketing 2005 to Present

Up Close and Personal Inc., Ann Arbor, MI

A national financial planning agency with more than 100 locations nationwide
 Director of Product Development and Marketing 2001 to 2005

Lime Green Investments, Ann Arbor, MI

A boutique financial planning agency specializing in environmentally responsible investments
 Marketing Manager 1999 to 2001
 Associate Marketing Manager 1996 to 1999

EDUCATION

Master of Business Administration

University of Michigan

Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting

Central Michigan University



Crafting the cover letter

The cover letter is as important as the résumé, because it introduces you to your prospective employer, and gives you a few critical seconds to make yourself stand out. This is where you first need to establish yourself as a legitimate candidate, and not a random job-seeker who is in the middle of an e-mail blast. It is important, therefore, to customize a cover letter to the employer you are contacting.

Sending a résumé without a cover letter could portray an unprofessional and inexperienced job-seeker. Take the time to craft and proof a cover letter. Research the company and include appropriate information in your letter. This will demonstrate that you are a serious candidate and could instantly set you apart from others.

Cover letter format:

Your name
Mailing address
City, state, and ZIP Code
Telephone number(s)
E-mail address

Today's date

Addressee's name
Professional title
Organization name
Mailing address
City, state, and ZIP Code

Dear Mr. (or Mrs.) last name,

Begin your letter with a statement that establishes a connection with your reader, a probing question, or a notable quote. Briefly say what job you are applying for.

The body of your letter should be one to two short paragraphs that make relevant points about your qualifications. Do not summarize your résumé! You can incorporate a column or bullet point, but not the entire résumé. Choose some qualifications that really target the position you are interested in but fight the tendency to oversell at this point. You want to save some information for the interview, after all.

Your closing paragraph should initiate action by explaining what you will do next (e.g., call the employer), or instigate the reader to contact you to set up an interview. Always close by showing appreciation.

Sincerely yours,

Your signature (handwritten)
Your name (typed)

Enclosure: Résumé



Sample cover letter

August 24, 2008

Kyle Curtin
Brown Cow Interactive
478 Woodward Ave.
Birmingham, MI 45990

Dear Mr. Curtin:

I read with interest your requirements for an Account Supervisor. I am interested in working for a dynamic and fast growing interactive marketing firm such as yours and have noted your progress since your company started in 2001.

In my position at EastWay Advertising, I was responsible for managing more than \$17 million in national advertising revenue along with developing and executing new online and offline initiatives designed to motivate consumer purchases and increase revenue. As the lead member of the account team, I was responsible for moving overall client retention from 76% to 92%, as well as growing several key verticals. I believe I can bring a high level of expertise and experience to your organization while making an immediate impact.

The attached résumé briefly outlines my experience and accomplishments. If it appears that my qualifications meet your current needs, I would be happy to further discuss my background in a meeting with you. I will be contacting you the week of September 1 to follow up and schedule a personal interview.

Sincerely yours,

Lesley Smith

Enclosure: Résumé



Building toward a successful interview

With a solid résumé and cover letter in hand, it is time to prepare for your interviewers. There is still a lot of work to do. A poor interview may ruin your prospects of employment, no matter how impressive your résumé. A good interview will improve them. **A great interview can secure the position.**

Preparing for an interview is therefore critical to your success. Below are some of the key elements to putting together a fantastic interview the employer will remember.

Know your résumé and yourself

With all the time you have put into writing a stellar résumé, you will want to make sure you take the time to know it inside out.

- **Think of how your skill set relates to the position.** An interviewer will want to see how your skills and experiences will translate into their environment, so be prepared to tell them how.
- **Play to your strengths.** After understanding the company and position you are applying for, identify the areas where you think you will add the most value, and what areas you will need to improve on.
- **Do not ignore your shortcomings.** Always turn them into a positive. If your skill set has a weakness, turn it into an advantage by describing it as an opportunity to improve upon your current set. You can also talk about how you have overcome your weaknesses in the past. The key is to remain positive but realistic, and never present your weaknesses as unworkable.
- **Be prepared with specific examples.** Think about and be prepared to discuss specific examples of situations where your contributions made a real impact. Saying that you are good with public speaking is one thing; discussing how you made a big presentation and fielded questions in front of a packed auditorium is another.
- **Be prepared to go beyond the résumé.** Even if your résumé detailed specific accomplishments, be ready to identify more. Use the interview to either expand upon the details you give, or offer up new ones. Be prepared to provide specific numbers and examples.
- **Know what you want.** Your résumé should give an indication of what you have achieved, but be prepared to talk about your career and personal goals, both long- and short-term. Your interviewer wants to make sure you are a career-minded individual, not just someone looking for a job.

Research the company and the industry

The more you know about the company you are applying to, the more serious a candidate you present yourself as, and the better the chance you have of standing out from the crowd.

- **Research the company, position, and the industry,** and have questions on hand relating to each. You will demonstrate a good knowledge of and interest in the company, and you will show the interviewer that you respect his or her time.
- **Match yourself to the opportunity.** It is important that you think ahead of time how your skills, experience, and interest match up to the position in question. The question on every interviewer's mind will be, "What can you do for us?" not "What can we do for you?" So you need to make sure your skills fit the position, not the other way around.



Building toward a successful interview

- **Understand where the position lies** within the current organizational structure. This could also help you ask a question or two about your career path within the company, which will demonstrate a long-term vision and commitment to the company.
- **Know the company's competition.** Have a question or two ready about how the company differs from them. This will demonstrate you have done your homework, and already know who you will be competing against if hired.
- **Communicate your interest** in this industry, company, and position to the interviewer. The more specific you can be about why that particular position appeals to you, the better.

Practice for the interview

It is never a bad idea to practice for your interview, even if it means sitting in front of a mirror and hearing yourself answer practice questions. Get a feel for what you will say, how you will say it, and make sure you are exuding the right confidence. If you are working through a staffing company, discuss your interview strategy with your recruiter. Ask the interviewer for any insight they have on the company and the skills and qualities they are seeking in a new hire.

Practice questions

While it is important to be prepared for anything, you gain an advantage by knowing the kinds of questions you will be facing. Below are some of the types of questions you can expect to hear.

Work-related questions

An interviewer will ask work-related questions about your past employment, your current position and responsibilities, and your long-term career goals. This is your opportunity to cement yourself as a qualified candidate by spelling out the achievements you outlined in your résumé.

As always, focus on your professional accomplishments, and make your answers concise but informative. Avoid going off on tangents or talking too much about your personal life.

Below are some of the work-related questions you might be asked:

- What are your long-term/short-term career goals?
- What are the most important qualities you look for in a company, position, and/or manager? Why are they important?
- Why are you currently seeking a change in employment?
- If you stayed with your current employer, what would be the next position or step for you?
- Describe one of your greatest accomplishments in a previous position.
- Do you prefer a slow-, medium-, or fast-paced environment? Why?
- All things being equal, would you rather be part of a group or lead it?
- How do you work under pressure?
- How would previous co-workers describe your strengths and weaknesses?
- In your current position, describe how you rank among your peers.
- What professional skills are you currently working to improve?



Building toward a successful interview

- Describe how others perceive you as a manager.
- Describe how you organize yourself to meet deadlines and goals.
- What are the key ingredients to maintaining successful business relationships?
- What has been your biggest challenge in a previous position?
- What is missing from your current employer?

Behavior-based questions

In addition to asking work-related questions, employers frequently use behavior-based interviewing techniques, which examine an employee's past behavior as a gauge for their future performance. Prepare yourself by analyzing your skills and those required by the position, and identify situations where you have successfully demonstrated those skills. Have several examples of your accomplishments, and break down each answer into three segments:

1. The past situation
2. The specific action that you took
3. The end result of your action

Not all behavior-based interview questions are looking for a success story. The interviewer may ask you about a situation or project that went wrong to see what you did. They want to know how you dealt with a bad and stressful situation, what you learned from the experience, and what steps you took to ensure it did not happen again.

Below are some behavior-based questions you might be asked:

- Tell me about a situation where you had to make a quick decision.
- Can you describe for me how you led a cross-functional team on a project? What were the results?
- Describe for me a situation with a difficult customer.
- Tell me about the best decision you have made.
- How do you ensure you understand your customers' needs?
- Tell me about a time when you went the extra mile to support your team and how you did it.
- Describe a time when you were involved in a stressful situation, but were still able to get the job done.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to deal with conflict with a team member.
- Tell me about a time when you had to show leadership among your peers/team.

Your questions for the employer

In an interview, it is just as important to ask questions as it is to answer them. By asking relevant, informed questions about *the company, the department, and the position*, you will demonstrate a strong, proactive interest in the position. You also present yourself as someone who is ready to work not just for any company, but for this company in particular.



Building toward a successful interview

Below are some of the questions you could ask an interviewer:

Company-focused questions

- How would you describe the culture of the company?
- Where do you see the company among the competition? What are the most important differentiators for the organization?
- Can you describe the organization's management style? What type of individuals thrive in this type of work environment?
- What was it about this company that made you want to work here?
- What are the pros and cons of the company?

Department-focused questions

- Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
- What concerns are currently facing this department?
- Whom would this position interact with most, and what are those individuals like?
- What is the culture of the department, and what types of personalities work well within it?
- How do your direct reports perceive your management style?

Position-focused questions

- Describe for me a typical day.
- What characteristics would the ideal candidate for this position possess?
- How will my performance be measured?
- What goals have been set for this position?
- How important does management consider this position? Where does it fit in the priorities set for the organization as a whole?
- Who has been the best at this position and why?
- What areas of my background can I further clarify for you?
- How do you feel my experience and personality would fit in this position?
- What is the next step going forward?



Building toward a successful interview

The do's and don'ts of an interview

It is almost show time. Make sure to have everything you need ready, and to remember all your preparations. Below are some of the things you will want to remember as the big day arrives.

Interview etiquette

- **Confirm the date, time, place, and directions for the interview.** Factor in extra time for traffic conditions and to find parking. Arrive at least 15 minutes early.
- **Turn off your cell phone** or leave it in your car, along with your briefcase or purse.
- **Treat everyone you meet as if they are the interviewer.** Treating an administrative assistant or an intern as an interviewer can never hurt your chances.
- **Carry only your portfolio** with clean, unfolded, unstapled copies of your résumé, the interview questions you prepared ahead of time, and a list of references.
- **Remember that this is a sales presentation.** You are selling your capabilities. Be prepared to discuss your professional accomplishments, not your life story.
- **Remember that you are always interviewing,** no matter how casual the setting may be. If you are asked to a lunch interview, order something that is easy to eat with a fork (like a salad), and forgo the big sloppy burgers or spaghetti. Order something that is moderately priced. And never order anything alcoholic, even if everyone else is. You want to remain sharp and alert!

Non-verbal communication skills

- **Dress the part.** Professional dress is always appropriate. It does not matter if it is a *Fortune* 500® company or a small, casual online agency. Always dress conservatively. Keep accessories, makeup, nail polish, and cologne to a minimum.
- **Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake.** This is your first chance to demonstrate self-confidence.
- **Maintain eye contact** at all times. If you do not, you will appear insecure, or worse, insincere.
- **Use positive vocal qualities and facial expressions.** Make your voice strong, steady, and confident. Keep calm, composed facial expressions. Take notes during the interview, especially important information about your prospective job duties. This demonstrates you are listening, and you are thinking ahead.

Verbal communication skills

- **Correctly pronounce** the name of the interviewers. If you are not sure, clarify the pronunciation at the start of the interview. The last thing you want is to mispronounce their names at the end of an interview.
- **Listen carefully** to what the interviewer is saying, and respond accordingly. If you do not understand a question, do not be afraid to ask for clarification.
- **Respond** with concise, well-considered answers. Do not ramble on or go off on tangents.
- **Pay attention** to the interviewers' expressions and body language. Adjust your responses so you do not appear overbearing or overconfident. But do not appear tentative when sharing your skills and abilities. It is all about maintaining a delicate but steady balance between confidence and respect.
- **Avoid inappropriate language.** Slang or cursing can end an interview quickly.
- **Be genuine** when you thank each interviewer for their time, and express interest in the company and this opportunity. Repeat their names as you exit.
- **Ask for a business card from each interviewer.** If you do not know, ask them to clarify where they fit within the organization and how they relate to the position.



Building toward a successful interview

Interview don'ts

- **Never talk about money**, as this will send the wrong impression about what you are really after. Do not ask about salary and benefits until the subject is brought up by your interviewer.
- **Avoid overconfidence**. Maintain a careful balance between self-confidence and respect. Remember that the interviewers are looking for a team player, not a cocky self-promoter.
- **Do not talk over others**. Listen to what they are saying, and allow them to finish.
- **Focus on professional, not personal, accomplishments**. The interviewers are not interested in how many trophies you won in your golf league. They want to know how you are going to help their company.
- **Avoid negative comments** about previous employers or co-workers. This will make you seem like a complainer, not a doer.
- **Never treat the interview casually**, as if you are just shopping around or doing the interview for practice.
- **Be prepared** for typical interview questions. Make sure you have rehearsed the questions you think you will be asked.
- **Do not drop your guard**. Make sure you are professional no matter how casual the environment.



Reinforcing with an interview follow-up

Congratulations on your successful interview! You have made a great impression with your prospective employer. However your work is not done yet. Now you have to follow up with everyone you met. This is the perfect opportunity to cement yourself as a frontrunner.

Below are two things you will want to do within a day of your interview.

Conduct a self-assessment

Be honest with yourself, and assess how you feel the interview went. Focus on your own impressions, and avoid trying to predict the interviewers' impressions of you.

- What were your strong points in the interview?
- Where might you have fallen a bit short?
- How does the opportunity fit your goals?
- What did you like about the people, the company, and the opportunity?
- What did you not like about the people, the company, and the opportunity?
- Overall how interested are you in the opportunity?
- How does this opportunity compare to others you are considering and your present position?

Interview follow-up

Following up with your interviewers is a critical step that can make all the difference.

- After your self-assessment, call your recruiter to share your feedback. This will enable him/her to represent you properly during discussions with the employer.
- Send a follow-up e-mail, letter, or note to each interviewer. Thank them for their time and briefly reiterate your interest in the position and organization. Strike a good balance between gratitude and self-marketing. While you want to briefly reiterate some of your strengths, you do not want to make the letter all about you. This is a good time to reinforce why your skills are a good fit for this particular position and company. In other words, remind the interviewers what you can do for the company, not the other way around. Refer to the samples provided.
- If you met with multiple individuals, ensure they each receive a different thank you letter. Emphasize one element of your conversation with each person so you stand out among other candidates.

The following are three sample thank you letters.



Sample 1: Lots of thanks, little self-marketing

July 15, 2008

Richard Johnson
Vice President of Interactive Marketing
Digital Lizard
937 Industrial Road
Chicago, Illinois 60602

RE: Interview Follow-Up

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I realize your day must be extremely busy, so please allow me a few more moments of your time in order to thank you for my interview on July 14, 2008.

I sincerely appreciate having been given the opportunity to interview at Digital Lizard and specifically with you. I learned a great deal about the company during our time together, and remain deeply impressed by your organization's goals, culture, and opportunities.

Should you have any additional questions for me, I will be pleased to answer them as I look forward to speaking with you again.

Thank you for the privilege of learning more about Digital Lizard, the interactive marketing account management opportunity, and you.

Sincerest regards,
Benjamin Lewis



Sample 2: Balance of thanks and self-marketing

July 15, 2008

Richard Johnson
Vice President of Interactive Marketing
Digital Lizard
937 Industrial Road
Chicago, Illinois 60602

RE: Interview Follow-Up

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Please allow me to thank you for my interview on July 14, 2008.

During my interview, I discovered Digital Lizard's unique mission, culture, and impressive accomplishments. I feel privileged to have had this opportunity to be considered, and look forward to learning even more about Digital Lizard, the interactive marketing account management opportunity, and you.

Given my unique experience and qualifications, I am excited about the prospect of a career at Digital Lizard. If I can facilitate your decision-making with additional information, then I would certainly welcome the opportunity to meet with you again.

Many thanks and sincerest regards,
Benjamin Lewis



Sample 3: Little thanks, lots of self-marketing

July 15, 2008

Richard Johnson
Vice President of Interactive Marketing
Digital Lizard
937 Industrial Road
Chicago, Illinois 60602

RE: Interview Follow-Up

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Please allow me to thank you for my interview on July 14, 2008.

Given my unique experience and qualifications, I am excited about the prospect of a career at Digital Lizard. After spending time discussing the needs of your clients, I feel I have a clear sense of what it would take to be successful. I am confident that my skills and experience in marketing, promotions, and online advertising will enable me to make a valuable and immediate contribution to the team.

If I can facilitate your decision-making with additional information, then I would certainly welcome the opportunity to meet with you again.

Sincerest regards,
Benjamin Lewis



Finishing up and accepting an offer

With a powerful résumé, a stellar interview, and a smart follow-up, you just landed the opportunity you wanted. But there is one more thing to do before heading over to your new company. You still need to make a professional exit from your current employer. It is always best to leave on good terms, and maintain the positive relationships you built.

After you have accepted an offer, you will want to do the following.

Prepare a letter of resignation

Briefly express your gratitude for the opportunity, thank your manager, and compliment the organization and your colleagues. Indicate your last day, and mention that this is a decision that helps to move your career forward. This is not the time or place to list what you did not like about the job, the boss, or the workplace. Remember, it is about making a professional exit.

Prepare to handle a counter-offer from your current employer. Be gracious but firm in your decision. Refer to the next section for additional information about counter-offers.

Withdraw from the job market

Notify anyone who is actively involved in your job search. This can include colleagues, a recruiter, and potential employers you have interviewed with. Cancel any upcoming interviews in a professional and courteous manner, as you do not wish to waste their time now that you are off the market.

Take the opportunity to thank everyone for their time and assistance.

Remove your résumé from the Internet

The last thing your new employer wants to see after you have accepted their offer is your résumé still making its rounds on job boards. It can be perceived as a lack of commitment, and can unexpectedly sour their opinion of you.

Connect with your current HR department

Confirm your benefits grace periods, continuation provisions, and your COBRA rights. Ensure that you avoid gaps in coverage when changing jobs.

Things to do when resigning

- **Write a professional resignation letter.** Hand-deliver it to your immediate supervisor, and give a copy to the human resource manager.
- **Be graceful and professional.** This is not the time to burn any bridges.
- **Give the standard two weeks notice.** Any less is unprofessional.
- **Offer to train your replacement.** Ensure that your essential duties are covered after you exit.
- **Leave a transition plan.** Finish or transition all assignments. Leave a detailed plan for your supervision and/or replacement.



Finishing up and accepting an offer

- **Work as hard during your notice period** as you did on your first day on the job.
- **Thank your co-workers and supervisors.**
- **Leave on good terms.** You never know who you may end up working for and with in the future.

Things never to do when resigning

- **Avoid making negative statements** or sharing opinions that are inappropriate or unprofessional.
- **Never gloat.** Talking about the additional money, title, or perks you will be receiving at your new company is never a good idea.
- **Your transition period is not the time to air grievances** about issues or transgressions you may have faced.
- **Do not miss work** or come in late during your transition period.
- **There is no reason to feel guilty about leaving.** Focus on the fact that you are leaving for a great career opportunity.
- **Never entertain a counter-offer.** Most employees who reconsider their resignation typically end up leaving the company within a year for the same reasons they resigned in the first place.

Writing a resignation letter

When writing a resignation letter, follow this basic outline:

- First paragraph – State your intention of resigning your position and leaving the company.
- Optional second paragraph – State your reason for resigning and your appreciation for the opportunities you have had with this employer.
- Closing paragraph – Thank your supervisor and the company, and end the letter on a positive note.

Following are two sample resignation letters.



Sample Resignation Letter 1

August 13, 2008

Michael Reede
Computer Systems, Inc.
17436 Megabyte Drive
San Francisco, CA 94115

Dear Mr. Reede:

Please accept this letter as my formal notice of resignation from Computer Systems, Inc., effective August 27, 2008. The associations I have made during my employment here will truly be memorable for years to come.

I trust the traditional two-week notice is sufficient to transition my responsibilities, and to commence the process of identifying a replacement. I am happy to assist in the training and transition of my replacement.

Sincerely,

Your signature
Katherine Smithson, IT Systems Engineer

cc: Natasha Henri, Ken Maxwell



Sample Resignation Letter 2

August 13, 2008

Michael Reede
Computer Systems, Inc.
17436 Megabyte Drive
San Francisco, CA 94115

Dear Mr. Reede:

Please accept this letter as formal resignation of my position as an IT Systems Engineer with Computer Systems, Inc.

Wednesday, August 27, 2008 will be my last day of employment with the company.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to work with such an outstanding organization. I have enjoyed learning and growing within the organization, and am proud to have been part of a dynamic team.

Sincerely,

Your signature
Katherine Smithson, IT Systems Engineer

cc: Natasha Henri, Ken Maxwell



Ruling out a counter-offer

A counter-offer from your present employer may sound tempting and even a little flattering, but consider this fact. According to the National Employment Association, more than 80 percent of people who accept counter-offers are no longer with their employer six months later, and nearly 90 percent of them leave within 12 months.

That is because a raise or a new title rarely address the reasons why you wanted to move on in the first place. If, for example, you felt that your career had stalled, a new title will not change that. If you did not enjoy the company culture, no raise is going to make you feel better.

Below are some important considerations you must keep in mind when taking measure of a counter-offer.

Questions of money

- If your employer is enticing you with money, ask yourself why you are suddenly worth more now. Is it that your value increased overnight? Or is it that it is cheaper for your employer to give you a raise than to replace you immediately?
- Along those same lines, consider that your employer might just be buying time. That \$12,000 raise may not look so good if your employer is actively looking for your replacement. What happens when they find him/her? Especially if he/she is willing to work for less money?
- The raise you receive might be the same one you are due to receive during your next review.
- Even if you do not accept a counter-offer, do not use it to try and increase the salary you have already agreed upon with your new employer. This could change your new employer's mind about you very quickly.

Questions of perception

- Even if your employer makes you a counter-offer, it may mean they felt betrayed or even blackmailed when you announced your decision to leave. From now on, your every move will be scrutinized. You are out of the inner circle. Your chances of promotion just diminished, because most companies are unwilling to promote someone who was about to leave them. And if the company has a downturn, you may be one of the first to be let go.
- Accepting a counter-offer also affects your prospective new employer. You are, in essence, going back on your word and written agreement, and this will smear your name and trust with those involved in your search.
- Anyone who helped you secure the new position, including your recruiter, will likewise feel stung. This will make them much less inclined to help you in the future.

Just remember that you began your job search for very specific reasons. Chances are, a counter-offer does not address any of them, and within a year, you may very well be out of the company regardless. Stand firm and graciously decline a counter-offer, and embrace the new opportunity you have just earned for yourself.