

CSP E-Lesson 6, Fall 2008

Words of Wisdom: "Job-hunting is a full-time job. I made it easier by keeping a notebook of the information I needed for job applications."



Nate Winston, 24, Purchasing agent, Macon, GA

The Long and the Short of It

"Hello, Phoenix, it's nice to meet you. I've heard good things about you from your friends. I'm glad you're interested in working with us." Harry Thurber, the hiring manager for Timepieces Unlimited, leads Phoenix Ralston to a table covered with pens and job application forms.

"Have a seat and fill out this application," Mr. Thurber tells him. "When you're finished, we'll have a short interview." Mr. Thurber gives Phoenix a welcoming smile as he guides him to a chair.

"This is much longer than the other application I filled out," Phoenix thinks to himself as he glances over three sheets with questions printed on both sides. "This company certainly wants to know a lot about me."

Job applications differ among companies; however, some information is common to all job applications. List five types of information that employers want on employment applications. Put the information in what you think is the order of importance to a prospective employer, starting with the most important.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

First Impressions Count

Your job application is the first impression an employer gets of you, and it delivers an instant message.

From the application, employers learn the following things:

- Can the applicant follow instructions?
- Does the applicant understand the questions?
- Is the application neat and legible?
- Is the application complete?
- Is the application accurate?
- Does the application have spelling and grammatical errors?
- Did the applicant take the time to proof carefully?
- Does the applicant have skills that will be valuable to the company?

Even if you have a perfectly prepared cover letter and resume, many employers will ask you to fill out an employment application. The application is used as a screening device to eliminate unpromising candidates for a job before time is spent reviewing a resume.

Resumes look different according to the document style used by job candidates, but applications within one company look the same. Therefore, employers save time learning about a candidate by examining key pieces of information on the application. Generally, during the first screening, employers spend only a few seconds looking at each application. What kind of impression will your application make? If it is messy, carelessly completed or incomplete, it suggests that you will do careless and incomplete work.

On the following pages, you'll find portions of the job applications from two graduates of the same high school. Imagine you are an employer. Select one applicant for an interview. First, compare the applications, then evaluate and describe why each application made either a good or a poor impression.

First Impressions Count (Continued)

Applicant No. 1 - John W. Smith

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT (answer all questions - please print)			
			Date of application _____
Name	<u>John W. Smith</u>	Social Security No. <u>136 00 000</u>	
	Last First Middle		
Home Phone	<u>555 1872</u>		
Email Address	<u>Big boy at msw.com</u>		
Current address:	<u>1003 Ten street Bayside IL 30211</u>		
	Street	City	State Zip Code
Are you a U.S. citizen? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Have you ever been convicted of a felony? _____			
Do you speak, write or understand any foreign languages? <u>no</u>			
If yes, which language (s) and how fluent are you? <u>english</u>			
EMPLOYMENT HISTORY			
Employer		Employed	
Name <u>Manita Inc.</u>		From Mo. <u>6</u> Yr. <u>2007</u>	
Address <u>Main street</u>		To Mo. <u>7</u> Yr. <u>2007</u>	
City <u>Bayside</u>	State <u>IL</u>	Zip <u>30211</u>	Position <u>Sales</u>
Contact Person <u>BOB</u>	Phone No. _____		Salary _____
Reason for leaving <u>not enough money</u>			
EDUCATION			
High School /GED school	School name <u>Bayside HS</u>	Year graduated <u>2007</u>	
	City <u>Bayside</u>	State _____	
Check highest level completed	High school <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Associate _____	Bachelor _____
Colleges/Universities attended	Total Credits Earned _____	Major _____	Degree (if any) Year received _____
Do you have any other experience, training, qualifications or skills which you feel should be brought to our attention. If yes, please explain. <u>Am a great salesman</u>			
REFERENCES			
Please list two references other than relatives or previous employers			
Name <u>Cindy Paine</u>	How long has this person known you <u>1</u> yrs.		
Phone No. _____	Relationship <u>Sulfrund</u>		
Name <u>Rudy Fink</u>	How long has this person known you <u>2</u> yrs.		
Phone No. _____	Relationship <u>neighbor</u>		

First Impressions Count (Continued)

Applicant No. 2 - Matthew L. Johnson

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT (answer all questions – please print)			
			Date of application <u>9/15/2008</u>
Name <u>JOHNSON MATTHEW L.</u>		Social Security No. <u>137 00 000</u>	
Last	First	Middle	
Home Phone <u>555 520 5551</u>			
Email Address <u>JOHNSON31@TIMES.COM</u>			
Current address: <u>22 OAK STREET BAYSIDE IL 61231</u>			
Street	City	State	Zip Code
Are you a U.S. citizen? <u>YES</u>			
Have you ever been convicted of a felony? <u>NO</u>			
Do you speak, write or understand any foreign languages? <u>YES</u>			
If yes, which language (s) and how fluent are you? <u>FRENCH I STUDIED FRENCH FOR THREE YEARS AND I HAVE BASIC CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS</u>			
EMPLOYMENT HISTORY			
Employer		Employed	
Name <u>RANDY'S SHOE STORE</u>		From Mo. <u>4</u> Yr. <u>2007</u>	
Address <u>6 MAIN STREET</u>		To Mo. <u>9</u> Yr. <u>2007</u>	
City <u>BAYSIDE</u>	State <u>IL</u>	Zip <u>61231</u>	Position <u>SALES</u>
Contact Person <u>RANDY CONWAY</u>	Phone No. <u>555 520 3527</u>	Salary <u>8 HOURLY</u>	
Reason for leaving <u>TO ATTEND SCHOOL</u>			
EDUCATION			
High School /GED school	School name <u>BAYSIDE H.S.</u>	Year graduated <u>2008</u>	
	City <u>BAYSIDE</u>	State <u>IL</u>	
Check highest level completed	High school <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Associate	Bachelor Masters
Colleges/Universities attended	Total Credits Earned	Major	Degree (if any) Year received
Do you have any other experience, training, qualifications or skills which you feel should be brought to our attention. If yes, please explain. <u>I AM ACTIVE ON MY COMMUNITY SOFTBALL TEAM AS A PLAYER AND I TEACH SOFTBALL TO YOUNGER KIDS</u>			
REFERENCES			
Please list two references other than relatives or previous employers			
Name <u>MARSHALL LOFT</u>	How long has this person known you <u>6</u> yrs.		
Phone No. <u>555 520 6006</u>	Relationship <u>SOFTBALL COACH</u>		
Name <u>SANDRA BIERS</u>	How long has this person known you <u>4</u> yrs.		
Phone No. <u>555 520 6005</u>	Relationship <u>SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELOR</u>		

First Impressions Count (Continued)

Imagine that you are the employer who is deciding whether to hire Matthew Johnson or John Smith for the one position you have available. Evaluate each application and list five reasons why the applicant made a good or poor impression.

Applicant No. 1 John Smith

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Overall Impression of John Smith Good _____ Poor _____

Applicant No. 2 Matthew Johnson

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Overall Impression of Matthew Johnson Good _____ Poor _____

Cheat Sheets Allowed!

You may be asked to fill out a job application in person, on line, or by e-mail. No matter how you submit your application, be prepared to feel like you are taking a test. You'll need to provide detailed information about your work, including name, address, and contact information for all previous employers; dates of employment; specifics about schools attended and years completed; and references.

The wonderful thing about completing a job application is that, unlike taking a test, you are allowed to organize all of your important information ahead of time and openly copy the correct answers.

Here are sample sections found on most job applications. Fill out the sections with the information available at this point in your life. You can keep this information in a notebook or on your computer to use when you fill out future applications. You should update the information as your experience, education, and contacts change and grow.



Cheat Sheet One: Your personal contact information

Name _____

Current address _____

Other addresses where you have lived during the past five years

Home phone number _____

Cell phone number _____

E-mail address _____

Cheat Sheets Allowed! (Continued)



Cheat Sheet Two: Work History

You may be asked for a record of your employment history for up to ten years. You will need information about each job you held. On most applications, you will be required to list your previous employers in order, starting with the most recent. If employers see a gap in your work history they may ask you for the reason.

Employer _____

Address _____

Contact Person _____ Phone No. _____

Dates you were employed: From Month. _____ Year _____ to Month _____ Year _____

The position you held _____

The salary you were paid _____

Your reason for leaving _____



Cheat Sheet Three: Education

Education	Name and address of school	Years attended	Degree /Certificate
High School		20__ to 20__	
College		20__ to 20__	
Technical		20__ to 20__	
Other		20__ to 20__	

Cheat Sheets Allowed! (Continued)



Cheat Sheet Four: Additional Skills

Here is where you make yourself shine. Employers need to learn about your many different skills. For example, you may know how to use several types of computer software. You have team work skills or leadership skills if you are a member of a team or a team captain. If you volunteer to read to senior citizens at a nursing home or teach English to immigrants, you have communication and interpersonal skills. If you cut lawns or cleaned gutters to earn the money to buy your own car, you are self-motivated and take initiative.

Take the time to analyze your background and identify the skills you've acquired. List your special skills in the chart below.

Other Special Skills	Type of Experience	Level of Expertise
Office Equipment, computers		
Technical, professional licenses		
Heavy equipment, machinery		
Languages		
Other		

Who Loves Ya?

"Hello Mrs. Montgomery, this is Lacy Cliff with Summerville Golf Course. I'm calling to ask you about Maureen Turner. She lists you as a job reference, and I'd like you to tell me a few things about her work experience." Lacy's pleasant, professional voice surprises Mrs. Montgomery, who isn't expecting the call. A frown creases her forehead as she tries to remember Maureen Turner.

"I think you must be talking about the girl who lives next door," Mrs. Montgomery answers hesitantly. "I'm afraid I don't know her very well. We say hello occasionally. I'm sure she's a very nice girl."

Lacy feels the irritation grow in her chest. "I'm sorry to have disturbed you Mrs. Montgomery. I thought you were better acquainted with her," Lacy apologizes and hangs up the phone. "So much for Maureen!" Lacy mutters to herself.

Maureen lost her opportunity to be hired at Summerville Golf Course for two reasons. First, she didn't ask Mrs. Montgomery's permission or even make her aware that she might receive a phone calling asking for a reference. Second, Mrs. Montgomery isn't qualified to give Maureen a reference because she has no personal knowledge of Maureen's skills.

No matter how much education and work experience you have, or don't have, the people you ask to serve as references can make or break your chances of being hired. A respected reference that is enthusiastic and honest about your skills and good qualities can convince an employer to give you a chance to prove yourself. How will you choose your references?

Be Selective

References are either professional or personal. Professional references are business people and include your employers, co-workers, supervisors and clients. Personal references are people who know you outside of work and will speak about your character. It's important to be selective in your choice of references. Review the list of characteristics needed in references. Add two more items to the list.

Who Loves Ya? (Continued)

Appropriate references include people with the following characteristics:

- Are familiar with your education, experience and skills
- Have worked with you as a supervisor, co-worker or subordinate
- Are respected in the community
- Have work experience or hold responsible positions
- Are aware of how to give a good reference and know what employers want
- Stay in touch with you regularly or have worked with you in the last four or five years
- Will give an honest evaluation of your abilities
- _____
- _____

Good Choice? Poor Choice?

In the following stories, do you think the people selected to be references were good choices? Explain your answer.

1. Gilly has been a waitress for seven years. One of her regular customers, a person she waits on twice a week, is an entrepreneur who owns a successful company. Over the years, Gilly has become friendly with him, his wife and family. They even socialize outside of the restaurant. Gilly feels that he knows her character and her work abilities. She is applying for a job in a different field and wants to ask him to serve as a reference for her. Do you think this is a good choice? _____ Why?

2. Jon attends church services every Sunday. After each service, he shakes hands and speaks with the minister as he leaves the church. As a faithful member of the congregation, Jon believes the minister will give him a good reference. Is this a good choice? _____ Why? _____

Who Loves Ya? (Continued)

3. Ivana has no work experience so she asks her boyfriend to be a reference. She's sure he will say nice things about her. Is this a good choice? _____ Why? _____

4. Trini doesn't get along with his boss at Period Dot Com Software, so he asks the department head, who has complimented his work, and one of his co-workers, who has a good opinion of him, if they will serve as a reference. Is this a good decision? _____ Why? _____

5. Colin, who is in high school, wants a part time job and is compiling the information he needs for job applications. For the last four summers, he has worked for an elderly couple who live on his street. He maintains their lawn and flower beds and helps them make small repairs around the house. He wants to ask them to provide a reference for him. Are they a good choice? _____ Why? _____

Respect Your References

You should communicate effectively with your references, so they will know what to expect. Fill in the following sentences with words from the list describing how references should be treated.

progress informed contact description thank you note
phone calls resume permission

1. Alert your references to possible _____.
2. Keep your references _____ of your _____.
3. Keep in touch. Don't lose _____ with your references.
4. Write each reference a _____.
5. Ask your references for _____ to use their name.
6. Give each reference a copy of your _____.
7. Give your references a _____ of the job for which you are applying.