



# Creating Your Resume

## Introduction

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This handout is designed to provide you with the “nuts and bolts” of putting together a resume. It will get you started by defining the resume and explaining how it is used, the information that is typically included, and explaining formats and offer suggestions on making your resume visually appealing. Please note that there is no right way to write a resume. There are number of different models and expert opinions on the subject; you will be served best by drawing from many styles to settle upon the format that best showcases your background for the position(s) for which you are applying.

## Definition and Purpose

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The resume is a valuable self-marketing tool in the job search (a brief snapshot of who you are).

The successful resume is:

- a brief, positive statement of your work related skills, experiences and education (1-2 pages at the most; the length of the resume varies by industry)
- designed to capture an employer’s attention so that s/he will want to interview you!

**Note:** As you prepare your resume, always think about the employer’s perspective!

Employers:

- read resumes in **20-30 seconds**
- read **100’s per day**
- want to know **specifically how you will add** to their organization
- expect you to **advertise your strengths** and will not assume anything about you
- are interested in **what you have to give**, not what you have to gain.

Employers review resumes looking for evidence of certain skills and characteristics which are documented on your resume.

**Employers are looking for many, if not all of the following skills:**

- Communication skills
- Motivation/initiative
- Academic credentials
- Interpersonal skills
- Ethics
- Presenting a positive image
- Work experience
- Leadership skills
- Technical skills
- Analytical skills
- Wanting the job!

Everything in your resume should be included for a deliberate purpose; resumes are not designed to tell your complete life story, but rather, they are ads designed to capture the attention of employers. The information provided should be relevant to their needs. Since different employers have different interests, it may be advantageous to design different resumes for different types of employers or positions.

## Content of a Resume

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The following information is typically included in a resume. Remember that the best way for you to write your resume will vary according to your background and the kinds of organizations and positions you are interested in. You will find that there are very few rules to resume writing. What you write and how you write it will depend on your background, your target audience, and your personal taste.

The attached Resume List worksheet can serve as a rough draft and it is a good way to get started, but do not limit yourself to this tool! You are encouraged to create sections which better reflect your background and your job target. Your goal is to showcase your experiences in a meaningful way for the employers you are targeting.

## Heading/Content Information

In this section include your name, address and telephone number. This may be a cell phone number or a landline phone number, just be sure to indicate if it is a cell phone number on your resume. If possible, you should also include an e-mail address if you have one and check it regularly.

- The contact information needs to be clearly visible to make it easy for the employer to contact you.

- The Heading is a section where you may be more visually creative.
- Employers often keep resumes for 6 months, so give appropriate contact information.

### **Career Objective**

The career objective is a brief statement of your short term employment goals.

- **The Big Debate.** Job hunting specialists disagree as to whether or a not it is necessary to include a career objective on your resume; however, the experts do agree that you will write a better resume and have a more successful job search if you define what you are looking for. A general resume does not appeal to any specific employer.
- **The objective statement gives you focus.** It clearly communicates your interest to the employer. Your experiences may not be directly related, but if an employer reads your objective first, the rest of the resume will be read with that in mind and he or she may be able to make connections more easily. The career objective is the thesis statement of your resume. It helps to articulate the skills, experiences and education you will bring to the job.
- **Most employers find objective statements helpful.** They like to see what you want to do in their organization; employers do not want to be career counselors.
- **Support your career objective statement with experience.** For example, if you say you have "interpersonal communication skills," cite evidence of interpersonal communication skills in your work, academic and/or community experiences.
- **A career objective must be focused to be effective.** Omitting the career objective is better than using one that is vague or does not fit. Focus your objective by:

*Position:* position as elementary school teacher

*Functional Area:* position in marketing

*Industry/Field:* position in investment banking

*Skills:* position utilizing my research and written communication skills

*Type of Organization:* position in small consulting firm

Some combination of the above areas often results in an effective objective.

**You can have more than 1.** Create separate resumes with different objective statements for different positions or employers.

### **Education**

Use this section to help the employer see how your academics have prepared you for the job.

- List **current/degree granting institution**, type of degree and program of study, year degree earned or expected, and the city and state where the institution is located.
- List **other universities or colleges** you have attended following the same format. These may be omitted if irrelevant and/or if space is limited.
- Omit **High School** information unless it is your highest level of formal education.
- **GPA** may be listed and should be if it is a selling point. If it is below 3.0, consider leaving it off as some employers will screen by this criteria (some may have a higher or lower cutoff). If you do not include it, the employer may wonder, "Is it really low?"

You may also list your GPA in your major or for your junior/senior year, if those figures are stronger, just be clear to indicate how you calculated the GPA. In time, many employers will want to see transcripts. You should be prepared to discuss academics/ grades in a positive way at any point - do not try to evade GPA questions. Be direct and not apologetic.

Under Education, you also may list:

- **course highlights**
- **independent study courses**
- **thesis name** (if you have one)
- **study abroad**
- **honors or scholarships**
- **how you funded college expenses**
- **training seminars**

### **Experience**

**What Counts?** Think broadly about your experience.

The experience section may include: paid or volunteer, full-time or part-time, summer or school year work, co-curricular positions, internships, work-study positions, self-run business (sales, lawn care, etc.), class projects - anything which might help the employer to see that you have related skills.

**How to list?** Choose experiences most important to you and most relevant to the type of work you want to do. Be sure to include:

- **Name of the organization**
- **Your job title or role**
- **City and state located**
- **Dates involved**
- **Summary of your responsibilities and accomplishments**

**How to describe?** Be positive, active, and accurate, using verbs and verbal phrases to describe your experience. Describe your positions positively without exaggeration. Employers will easily see through elaborate ways of describing basic tasks. Emphasize relevant skills, highlight accomplishments and leadership roles, and quantify when possible.

### **Activities**

Involvement is generally perceived as positive. Listing involvements may show your interests, commitments, energy level, leadership ability, management ability and/or communication skills. It can also help you if you do not have a lot of work experience and want to show skills you have gained while participating in outside activities.

- Include campus and community involvement.
- List the name of the organization, dates, and your type and level of involvement. If very substantial, consider listing in the Experience section. You may wish to include brief descriptions as you did in the Experience section. Names of committees or budget figures may add helpful details.
- Do not list a club if you did not actively participate. Employers are interested in meaningful experiences, not "resume fillers."
- Be sure to include honors groups and volunteer projects.

### **Skills**

A skills section may be included to highlight specific skills relevant to your job target.

- Examples of skill lists include: computer skills (PC/Mac platforms, Microsoft Office, Social media, etc.) language knowledge, and the use of scientific experimental equipment or procedures.

### **Interests**

If you have additional space on your resume, you may wish to include a brief interests section.

- Interests may work to round you out as a person, make you stand out among the crowd, and personalize your resume. They may be a point of connection or between you and the employer.
- Only list activities/interests that you regularly participate in and that have meaning for you.
- Be descriptive. Instead of "sports," specify "tennis and racquetball." Instead of "reading," specify "mystery novels."

### **References**

Many employers ask job candidates to provide references. These are individuals you have identified to speak or write on your behalf. They should be individuals who can speak to your job related skills and characteristics. Faculty members, advisors and former employers generally work well.

It is a good idea to have a mix of reference types (ex: faculty member, former employer and advisor), so the employer is able to learn how you interact in different settings.

References typically are not listed on the resume as you will want the employer to talk with you first. You should, however, be prepared to provide references at any time after your initial contact. On your resume, you may wish to list that references are available, but it is not necessary.

Be sure to ask individuals you wish to list if they would be willing to serve as references for you. It may be helpful to prepare a reference page listing those individuals, their titles, organizations, addresses and telephone numbers. Most employers will ask for 2-4 references.

### **Resume Formats**

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There are two common resume formats:

#### **Reverse Chronological**

- In each section, list your most recent experience first, and then work back through time. This format highlights your job titles and the organizations you have been associated with, and works best if these titles and organizations are related to your targeted position. It is the most common format and employers are familiar and comfortable with it. It is important to describe your experiences well.

#### **Functional**

- Draw from your experiences to create relevant skill categories. List each skill area and provide evidence of that skill by describing how you developed it, or by listing related achievements or accomplishments. This format highlights skills and abilities developed in variety of settings instead of focusing on where you worked or what your title was. It can be especially effective for career changers and individuals re-entering the work force. It can be more difficult to write and is not as popular with employers.

A combination of these formats or a more creative format may work well for some individuals.

## Visual Impact

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The visual impact of your resume is the first impression it makes; therefore, make sure that your resume portrays a positive image of you. The visually appealing resume is:

- **Consistent**
- **Easy to read or scan quickly**
- **Neat and professional in appearance**
- **Organized in order of importance**
- **Printed on high quality paper**
- **Perfect** (No typos)
- **Interesting to look at**

The attached sample resumes illustrate some different formats with solid visual appeal.

## Printing Options

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The most popular way to create resumes is to produce them on a computer and then laser print an original. The original may then be mass produced onto high quality paper. Most office supply and copy stores keep what they call resume stock on hand. This is medium weight paper with a high fiber content. Typical colors include white, ivory, gray and similar shades. To achieve a color coordinated job application package, you may wish to invest in additional sheets of blank paper for your cover letters and matching envelopes.

There are a variety of resume services available to consumers. If you chose to utilize a service, first shop around and then actively participate in the development of your resume. Be aware that resume writing services will charge a fee to put your resume together.

Once your resume is completed, have as many people as possible proofread it and provide you with feedback. The counselors/advisors at UMA locations are available to provide you with feedback.

## Electronic Resumes

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Some employers may ask you to submit your resume electronically, either through e-mail or through a job posting website. Unless specified otherwise, it is best to send your resume as part of the text of the e-mail message or in the text box on the job posting website. You may want to simplify your resume a bit by removing bullets, tabs, or other formatting before sending the e-mail. If the employer asks for the resume to be submitted as an attachment, make sure to send it in the specific format (MS Word, PDF, etc.) requested.

**Generally speaking, do not submit a resume as an attachment.** Although it is easy to attach your resume, many experts recommend including the text of the resume in the body of your e-mail instead of using an

attachment. Prospective employers often do not open attached resumes because they can be infected with a virus. If you are applying for a job online and the company offers the option of uploading a hard copy of your resume with your application, then go for it. Or, if an employer requests that you send a resume as an e-mail attachment, they will probably specify which formats are acceptable.

Be sure to send a test e-mail to yourself with the resume included before you send it to the employer. This way you can check to see if you need to make any formatting adjustments before submitting the resume. Also, print out a copy of the resume to see what it looks like on paper.

You should still include a brief cover letter when sending a resume electronically. Insert your cover letter in the body of the e-mail above the resume. If using attachments, send the cover letter as a separate attachment.

In the subject line of the e-mail, indicate the job title for which you are applying, as well as any job numbers listed in the job posting.

Bring a paper copy of your resume with you to an interview.

**For additional information, visit the Career Resource Center at your Center or Campus.**

## Chronological Resume Sample

**John Doe**  
johndoe@gmail.com

Current Address:  
100 Park Street, Apt. 1  
Augusta, ME 12345  
(207)123-4567

Permanent Address:  
67 Fern Lane  
Calais, ME 04619  
(207)987-6543

**OBJECTIVE** An entry-level accounting position that will allow me to apply my skills and further develop my knowledge of accounting.

**EDUCATION** UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT AUGUSTA, Augusta, ME  
B.S. Business Administration, Accounting Major  
Expected: May 2018 GPA: 3.30

**RELEVANT COURSES** Principles of Accounting I & II Business Law  
Intermediate Accounting I & II Principles of Management  
Cost Accounting Fraud Examination  
Auditing, Assurance & Consulting Business Finance

**HONORS/ ACTIVITIES** Dean's List; Rising Scholar Award; Student Government Association President; Accounting & Business Society Vice President.

**RELEVANT EXPERIENCE** UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT AUGUSTA, Augusta, ME  
*Student Administrative Aide I – Advising Center*  
**Fall 2014-Present** \*Entered student placement test scores into online database system.  
\*Answer phones and disseminate information to students, faculty and employers.  
\*Assist the Recruiting Coordinator using database management software.

**Summers 2012-2014** MACHIAS SAVINGS BANK, Calais, ME  
*Teller*  
\*Cashed checks and performed cash advances for customers.  
\*Processed deposits, withdrawals and payments for personal and business accounts on an IBM---compatible computer.  
\*Opened safety deposit box accounts and assisted customers into and out of the vault to access their boxes.  
\*Balanced my cash drawer and did back-up work at the end of the day.

**Fall 2008 - Summer 2011** CALAIS ACE HOMECENTER, Calais, ME  
*Cashier*  
\*Responsible for cash sales, sales on account, layaways and making payments.  
\*Assisted customers successfully.

# Functional Resume Sample

**Jane Doe**

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e-mail: jane.doe@maine.edu

Current Address:  
123 State Street  
Gardiner, ME 04473  
(207) 567-8901

Permanent Address:  
436 Sabattus Street  
Lewiston, ME 04240  
(207) 345-6789

## **EDUCATION**

University of Maine at Augusta, Augusta, ME, expected May 2018  
B.S., Business Administration: Management Major  
Minor in Small Business Management

## **ORGANIZATIONAL/ MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

- \*Developed a company-wide Customer and Employee Safety and Security Training Program for approximately 125 employees.
- \*Organized annual public relations & community events (Sam's Pizza).
- \*Successfully motivated employees to participate in summer promotions.
- \*Served as an administrative liaison between management and its franchise owners.
- \*Completed daily financial reports.
- \*Trained and supervised new employees.
- \*Delegated tasks.

## **COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

- \*Experienced with Microsoft Office: Word, Excel and PowerPoint software as well as COREL5, SYSTAT and the Internet.
- \*Implemented the Customer and Employee Safety and Security Training Program.
- \*Participated in commercials and training videos as an actor and script writer.
- \*Handled customer concerns and complaints.
- \*Informed University of Maine Alumni about current events and cleared up many misunderstandings between them and the University.

## **SALES/ MARKETING SKILLS**

- \*Organized and implemented summer promotions for Sam's Italian Foods and its franchises.
- \*Created daily advertising schedules and distributed them to the media.
- \*Assisted in the research and development of commercials.
- \*Purchased inventory.
- \*Personally generated pledges from Alumni to help support the University of Maine.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

2014-2017. Sam's Italian Foods. Lewiston, ME  
2015-2017. University of Maine at Augusta General Alumni Association's Annual Alumni Fund Phonathon. Augusta, ME  
2014-2017. MooseTracks Cafe. Augusta, ME

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- \*Attended Chamber of Commerce Seminars on Marketing and Customer Satisfaction.
- \*Earned forty percent of college expenses.
- \* Ability to communicate in French at an intermediate level.
- \*Enjoy outdoor recreational and sporting activities.

# Action Words

*Here are some examples of action words that you may want to incorporate into your resume. The words are separated by skill set.*

## Management:

- Administered
- Analyzed
- Attained
- Chaired
- Contracted
- Coordinated
- Delegated
- Evaluated
- Improved
- Increased
- Organized
- Oversaw
- Prioritized
- Recommended
- Supervised

## Communication Skills:

- Addressed
- Arbitrated
- Authored

- Convinced
- Developed
- Directed
- Enlisted
- Formulated
- Mediated
- Moderated
- Negotiated
- Promoted
- Publicized
- Recruited
- Translated

## Research:

- Collected
- Critiqued
- Diagnosed
- Evaluated
- Examined
- Extracted
- Identified

## Technical:

- Interviewed
- Investigated
- Organized
- Reviewed
- Summarized
- Surveyed
- Systematized
- Assembled
- Built
- Calculated
- Computed
- Designed
- Devised
- Engineered
- Fabricated
- Maintained
- Operated
- Overhauled

**Technical (cont.):**

- Programmed
- Remodeled
- Repaired
- Upgraded

**Administrative:**

- Approved
- Arranged
- Catalogued
- Compiled
- Executed
- Generated
- Monitored
- Organized
- Prepared
- Processed
- Recorded
- Retrieved
- Specified
- Systematized
- Tabulated

**Helping:**

- Assessed
- Assisted
- Clarified
- Coached
- Counseled
- Demonstrated
- Diagnosed
- Educated
- Expedited
- Facilitated
- Familiarized
- Guided
- Motivated
- Referred
- Rehabilitated

**Teaching:**

- Adapted
- Advised
- Clarified
- Communicated
- Demystified
- Developed
- Encouraged

- Evaluated
- Explained
- Facilitated
- Guided
- Instructed
- Simulated
- Trained

**Creative:**

- Acted
- Conceptualized
- Customized
- Designed
- Developed
- Directed
- Established
- Fashioned
- Initiated
- Instituted
- Integrated
- Invented
- Originated
- Performed
- Revitalized



## Resume Worksheet

### Heading

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number & Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Objective** *A brief statement about what you want to do, where you want to do it, and your related skills*

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Field/Industry: \_\_\_\_\_

Skills: \_\_\_\_\_

### Education *Post-secondary education*

University: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Minor: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation date: \_\_\_\_\_ GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

Related courses: \_\_\_\_\_

University: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Minor: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation date: \_\_\_\_\_ GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

Related courses: \_\_\_\_\_

### Employment *Full-time, part-time, & internship experiences.*

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities/Accomplishments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities/Accomplishments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities/Accomplishments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_  
Responsibilities/Accomplishments: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Campus/Community Involvement** *Extracurricular activities, committees, community service, professional organizations, sports, clubs, etc.*

Activity/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Role: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dates: \_\_\_\_\_  
Accomplishments/Skills learned: \_\_\_\_\_

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Activity/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Role: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dates: \_\_\_\_\_  
Accomplishments/Skills learned: \_\_\_\_\_

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Activity/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Role: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dates: \_\_\_\_\_  
Accomplishments/Skills learned: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Honors/Awards/Certifications**

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**Skills & Abilities** *Any special skill sets that will help you stand out – computer skills, language skills, etc.*

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# The Cover Letter

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## What is it?

The cover letter is a letter of application which accompanies or "covers" your resume to a prospective employer. This business style letter is just as important as your resume. The purpose of the cover letter is to:

- explain why your resume has arrived
- demonstrate why you are a strong candidate
- request an interview.

## Content

Your cover letter should speak directly to the needs of the position and organization you are interested in. Most cover letters are 3-5 paragraphs long and follow a simple formula.

*First Paragraph.* Clearly state your purpose for writing. What position are you applying for? How did you hear about it? Why are you interested in this position? This organization?

*Middle Paragraphs.* Show the specific fit between your education and experience and the position you are applying for. You may refer to your resume but do not simply restate the information on the resume. Use the cover letter to add additional examples or details. If you are responding to a posted position, be sure to specifically address the qualifications mentioned in the posting.

*Closing Paragraph.* Request an opportunity to discuss the position and your qualifications in an interview. Offer to provide additional information such as transcripts or references. Express thanks for being considered.

## Enclosures

If you have supportive documents that you believe will work to your advantage, you may wish to enclose them. If the organization specifically requested information such as references or transcripts, be sure to include these materials or explain when and how you will be providing this information.

## Tips

- Keep it short - 1 page
- Use a business letter format
- Address the letter to a specific individual
- Call to verify spelling, title & gender
- If a name is not available, address the letter to the appropriate title such as director of personnel or search committee
- Make it interesting
- Speak to the needs of the organization
- Have the letter proofread by at least 3 people

## Draft Your Cover Letter

Use this page to generate some of the information you may wish to include in your letter.

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### Heading

Your address:

Your telephone number:

The date:

### Inside Address

Contact person's name:

Title:

Organization name:

Organization address:

### Salutation

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

### First Paragraph

Name of position you are applying for:

How did you hear about it:

Why are you interested in this position?

Why are you interested in this organization?

### Middle Paragraphs

What are the qualifications for this position?

What evidence can you provide to prove you have these qualifications?

What is the philosophy/mission of the organization?

How can you contribute to this?

What else should this employer know about you?

### Closing Paragraph

What would you like to happen next? Enclosures? Statement of appreciation.

### Closing phrase

Signature

Typed Name

# Sample Letter of Application

Your Address  
City, State, Zip  
Date

Name of Contact Person  
Title  
Name of Organization  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms.:

I would like to apply for the sales associate position which you listed with the Advising Center at the University of Maine at Augusta. My varied sales experience and my bachelor's degree in Business Administration are my strongest qualifications for this position.

As you can see from the enclosed resume, I have sold a variety of products through my extracurricular activities and have worked in many business environments through my cooperative education and internship positions. My marketing, computer research, and customer relations experiences, as well as my oral and written communication skills, should prove valuable to increasing (name of company's) sales volume. I am enthusiastic about pursuing a career in sales with (name of company) because of its diverse product line and international scope.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and can be reached at (phone number) from noon to five daily. I will be in Boston next week and will call you on (date) to discuss the possibility of an interview.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Your typed name

Enclosure

# Sample Letter of Inquiry

Your Address  
City, State, Zip  
Date

Name of Contact Person  
Title  
Name of Organization  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms.:

While reviewing past editions of the Wall Street Journal, I came across an advertisement you placed concerning an opening for a promotions assistant. I am sure that this particular post has been filled, but I am writing to inquire whether another position has opened up since then.

Upon graduation from the University of Maine at Augusta this May, I would like to begin a career in marketing and promotions with an organization such as yours. Many of my extracurricular and work experiences, detailed in the enclosed resume, involved organizing, promoting and publicizing events. I have had direct sales experience at We Three Caterers. Perhaps the most challenging and rewarding were my experiences with Senator Olympia Snowe and the University of Maine Literary Festival. I know that I can promote products and services and I am confident that I can provide the professionalism required for your promotions assistant position.

I look forward to hearing from you concerning possible employment opportunities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Your typed name

Enclosure