

Rules of the Road – Writing the Introduction Email

Professional e-mail is very different from casual e-mail or instant messenger. Remember: it's easier to be ruled out than ruled in for a position. Here are some rules to consider when writing an e-mail in which you are job prospecting or applying for a job:

- Always introduce yourself the same way you would in a cover letter.

*Dear Mr./Ms. So and So,
I am writing in regard to your posting on....for XYZ position in financial services.*

- Treat your e-mail as if you were writing a professional cover or thank-you letter on paper, but be brief.
- In the subject line, make it obvious why you are writing: "Application for XYZ position."
- Make sure you change the contact name and content according to the person/company to whom you are sending the message.
- If you are responding to an e-mail, include the original message in the reply, so the receiver can put your e-mail into the correct context. Also, respond within two business days.
- Always spell words correctly! - Don't just use spell check. It won't catch words that are spelled correctly, but are misused within the context of the sentence.
- Never use all capital letters. Employers may think that you are screaming. It is also difficult to read.
- Think about the message your e-mail address sends. Keep your address simple, and avoid unprofessional sounding names like "studmuffin" or "partygirl."
- Read your message carefully before you click the send button. The tone of an e-mail can often be misinterpreted.
- Have someone else proofread your message before you send it. It may be easier to find errors if you print and review your e-mail.
- Scan your resume for viruses before you attach it to your e-mail.
- Name your document "your name, resume." Employers receive hundreds of resumes via e-mail. If you follow-up by asking recruiters if they received your e-mail, they won't have to look through 300 attachments called "resume."
- If you are attaching your resume, ask the receiver if they would prefer that you send it in a different format, ie: Word Perfect, rich text format, or as a PDF.
- Do not assume that if an employer is informal that you should be.
- Don't just rely on e-mail. E-mail can be lost. Follow-ups can often be done via the telephone or regular mail.

Helpful Examples

Your e-mail can be a brief introduction:

*To: xyzperson@abccompany.org
From: cap@psued.edu
Subject: Application for summer internship*

Dear Ms. Clark,

I am writing in response to the ad posted on NACElink.com for a summer information systems/technology internship at ABCcompany (Job #123). Please accept my attached resume and letter as an application for this position. My skills and experience closely fit the posted job description, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Thank you,

Jane/John Doe Student

Or your e-mail can be your cover letter:

*To: xyzperson@abccompany.org
From: cap@psued.edu
Subject: Application for summer internship*

Dear Ms. Clark,

I am writing in response to the ad posted on NACElink.com for a summer information systems/technology internship at ABCcompany (Job #123). Please accept my attached resume as an application for this position.

My experience and personality closely fit the posted job description, and I am excited to apply.

As a management information systems student at Penn State, I have taken advantage of numerous research and design opportunities on campus and in class, which may be useful when working at ABCcompany. During my web design class, I volunteered to organize a group that would design and create a web site using Flash technology for a local company. The project was well received, and the organization is using some of our ideas. As a student worker in the School of Business, I also designed an Access data base to track student advising appointments and progress. The position required a high degree of confidentiality as well as a person with the ability to work on the project until it was completed.

In addition to maintaining a 3.0 GPA, and holding an on-campus job, I have also participated in various campus activities and leadership programs. By working on committees, I was able to demonstrate my leadership, teamwork, and time-management skills, which can be useful in a professional setting like ABCcompany.

I am eager to learn more about the internship position, and would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you in an interview about my qualifications. I am available to work from May 1 through August 2, 2003, and can be reached at.... I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Locating and Applying for Internships

By [Amy Marie Charland and Mary Ann Lawson](#)

There are many reasons for doing an internship. An internship will allow you to test your career objectives, help you identify your talents and direct you toward an appropriate career, and help you to acquire those essential practical and professional skills you need in the business world.

But finding an internship that will do all that for you takes some thought and preparation. Before setting out to find an internship, ask yourself these questions:

- Where do I want to do an internship? My hometown? Out-of-state?
- What type of work would I like to do? In what field?
- What type of organization would I like to do an internship for?
- What do I want to gain from an internship? What specific skills or experiences do I want to acquire?

Locating Opportunities

After you've answered these questions, you're ready to start searching for internships. Here are some suggestions for locating employers and internship opportunities.

- Check with your academic adviser to see if your department maintains listings of internship opportunities in your field of study.
- Visit your career services office. Many offices have internship listings and may be able to help you locate other resources such as books, employer files and directories, and web sites, such as Career Planit.
- Attend job fairs. Employers often use fairs to identify students for internships as well as for full-time employment.
- Visit your campus or local library for resources that provide information about internships. Once you find an internship you are interested in, locate additional information about the company so that you can tailor your resume and cover letter to the employer.
- Contact the Chamber of Commerce of the city where you would like to work to obtain information about local employers.
- Network. Talk with friends, family, co-workers, supervisors, instructors, administrators, and professionals in your field of study, and let them know you are searching for an internship. You never know who might be able to put you in touch with a contact person for an internship opportunity.
- Design your own internship. You may find a company that interests you but that doesn't have an internship program. Think about what you would like to gain from the internship and what you have to offer the company in return. Let the company know what your goals are and what you want to learn. If the employer is interested, you can work together to design a list of responsibilities and activities for your internship.

Applying for an Internship

Each employer has its own application process, so find out what the application procedure is for each internship that interests you. What is the deadline? What will the employer need from you to make your application complete? Start the process early.

Many internship opportunities require an application and/or resume. Here are a few tips to get you started:

- Use headings, bullets, and bold lettering to highlight important items.
- Keep your resume to one page.
- Place contact information at the top of your resume. Include your name, current address, and phone number. Consider including your permanent address and phone number so the employer can be sure to reach you.
- Consider using an objective near the top of your resume to give it focus. The key is to make the objective general enough to encompass all the opportunities you would consider but specific enough to let the reader know what type of position you seek.
- Your education section should include your degree, major and minor, anticipated graduation date, and name and location of the college you are attending. You may also want to include a list of related course work.
- Describe your related experience-such as a volunteer job or leadership position-using action verbs.
- Visit your career services office for sample resumes and have a career counselor review your resume.

For more information about putting together a resume for an internship, see "The Resume-Internship Connection".

You will also need to write a cover letter to accompany your resume. Here's how to get an employer's attention:

- Structure your letter along these lines:
 - First paragraph-State your purpose for writing and your interest in the internship opportunity.
 - Second paragraph-Highlight your education, experience and personal qualities that you can bring to the position.
 - Final paragraph-This is your "action" paragraph. Ask for an interview and let the employer know how you plan to follow up. You may also want to include any contact information that will help the employer contact you for an interview.
 - Close-Thank the employer for considering your application.
- Make your cover letter reflect your personality and unique qualities while also showing off your great writing skills!
- Proofread, proofread, and proofread! Remember that you never get a second chance to make a good first impression.

Many employers also interview internship applicants. For tips on how to succeed in the interview, see "Interviewing for Internships."

Your final task is to select the internship opportunity that is the best match for you. Review your goals for doing an internship and choose the opportunity that best meets those goals.

By [Amy Marie Charland and Mary Ann Lawson](#)

Are you thinking about doing an internship, but not sure if it would be worth your time? An internship offers many benefits.

- You'll gain valuable experience. Many employers look at the resume for work history—they want to hire people who have experience and can step into the job and be productive right from the start—and job applicants say their internships never go unnoticed. Experience will give you a competitive edge in today's job market.
- An internship will help you make contacts, get ideas, and learn about the field. You will be among people who have knowledge or access to job opportunities of interest to you.
- You will have the chance to apply theories learned in the classroom to a real world setting. The reverse is also true. During your internship, or when you return to the classroom after your internship, you will better understand the many nuances of business operations that relate to the theories you study.
- An internship can also expose you to the human factors inherent in any workplace and help smooth your transition from classroom to workplace.
- In many cases, an internship can lead to a job offer.