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bridges to university

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"co-op chaos (part 1)"



Introduction



AUTHOR(S): Stephanie Huynh

Hello everyone! Welcome to today's issue of the official bridges newsletter! We hope you're all enjoying the holidays! After such a busy semester, we all need a chance to relax with our friends and family (be it virtually or in person)!

This is also however, the same time where many co-op terms begin and many of you may be looking for part-time and full-time jobs. Even if not at this very second, learning how to apply to different job postings is an important life skill which takes time to perfect and polish. Today, we're here to help you on this task by guiding you through some important and well constructed tips that will aid you in this job application process. Whether it's a temporary summer job or your life long career, we're here to help you and get you one step closer to meeting your goals!

Speaking of reaching your goals, many of you may have already seen the importance and huge benefit of being friends with likeminded people who share your dreams and passion. That's why *bridges* is excited to announce our new mentorship program which pairs highschool students to university students who are already in the programs you aspire to be in. By getting in contact, you can learn amazing insider tips, essential study tricks, know how to ace every class, and know exactly what you should do during your first year! So keep an eye out for future emails where you'll get a chance to meet other students who are eager to help you out whenever you want!

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Your job description has vanished!

AUTHOR(S): Stephanie Huynh

Well actually, it probably hasn't! But if you're unable to read job descriptions, it will essentially feel like the job description has vanished! To ensure that you fully understand what a job entails, we will be showing you how to effectively read job descriptions. We'll do this by going through and explaining common parts of a job description below.

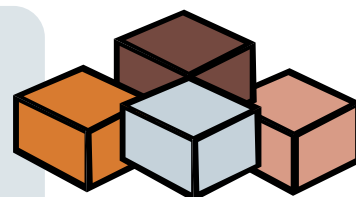
the basics...

Job Title. The name of the position being applied for.

Location. The location where the work will be done.

Duration. The length of the work term.

Company Overview. An in-depth summary of what the company does.



about the job...

Job Summary. An in-depth summary of the job position. When provided, this section provides a large amount of useful information about what the job entails. This includes information about the department you will be working in, the projects you will work on, and more.

Job Responsibilities. A section that highlights the key tasks that you will be expected to do upon being hired. This section can help you infer the skills required to work in this position. Upon determining these skills, you can highlight them in your cover letter and resume!

you and the job!

Job Requirements. This section highlights any relevant skills the employer wants to see in your application. You can use the listed requirements as a guide when creating your application. Remember that there is a difference between mandatory skills and recommended skills! A general rule you can follow is that you can apply to a position as long as you have 50~70% of the job requirements (unless you do not have a mandatory requirements).

How to Apply. One of the most important sections of the job description. This section is a set of steps to follow in order to submit your application. An application will be disqualified upon failure to follow these instructions. If you submit an application through a third-party source, it is recommended that you apply through the company website as well.

Dance cover letter, dance!

AUTHOR(S): Stephanie Huynh

Cover letters--sometimes an employer asks you for one, and others do not. They're an incredibly useful tool that is critical to the hiring process. Some employers don't even bother looking at your resume if your cover letter is poorly written. To help you write a cover letter, we have compiled a list of tips to ensure that you cover everything!



Only include a cover letter if it is required!

Read job descriptions carefully. Some specifically ask to not include a cover letter in your application. If a job description does not state whether or not to include one, we highly suggest to include one.

Include names in your salutations.

Avoid saying "To Whom it May Concern" or "Dear Sir or Madame". If a name is not available (multiple hiring managers, large institution, etc.), use something such as "Dear Selection or Hiring Committee" instead. It is important that your cover letter is as personal as possible and avoids sounding generic.



Break your cover letter into three parts.

A cover letter should have three key sections: one to introduce yourself, one to convince the employer why you are fit for the job, and one to thank the reader and answer any questions posed in the job description. By splitting your cover letter into parts, writing one will be significantly easier.

Dance cover letter, dance!

AUTHOR(S): Stephanie Huynh

Research the company.

Making your cover letter personal means that you have to put effort into looking into the company. Knowing about the company allows you to show your interest to the employer even before an interview.

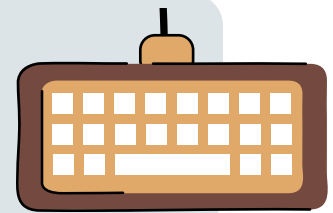


Do not hesitate to ask for an interview.

There's no harm in asking for an interview when you close your cover letter. If anything, it further showcases your interest!

Use keywords from the job description.

Highlighting keywords from a job description will show the employer that you are a strong fit for the position. Oftentimes, these keywords are nouns and may not be as straightforward as you may believe them to be.



Use the STAR method to discuss past experiences.

Use the STAR method to discuss past experiences. The STAR method is an acronym used to ensure you hit all the points when talking about notable experiences. Below, you can see what the STAR stands for:

S – Situation: What was the context?

T – Task: What was the goal of the project, class, or competition?

A – Action: What did you do specifically?

R – Result: How can you prove you did this well?



Polish up that resume!

AUTHOR(S): Hussain Jan

Did you know an average recruiter only looks at your resume for 6 seconds? In those 6 seconds, you have to make an impression on your employer that will make you stand out among the hundreds of resumes in front of them. So how exactly can you do that?



Keep it relevant. Talk about experiences which show how you can excel at this job. If it's not relevant to the job you're applying for, don't add it in.

Remember about ATS. Many companies use ATS (Applicant Tracking System) to get an initial impression of your resume. This is artificial intelligence. How exactly can we get on the robot's good side?

- Use "Jobscan" to optimize your resume
- Avoid using graphics. The algorithm might distort them
- Send your resumes as pdf, not .docx or word



Summary of Qualifications. This will be your first impression. Keep cool. You got this.

- Include Technical skills (What software are you good with?). Don't just list them, explain how you used it. What have you done with them?
- Include Interpersonal skills. Demonstrate when you've used traits like teamwork, communication, leadership. *Include relevant traits only. Back them up with evidence.*
- Should be 4-5 sentences in bullet points
- Quantify as much as you can. Don't just give a vague message
- Follow this format: Strong action Verb → Description of Task → End with Result
- Ex. "Developed a search algorithm for the Hack the North event which increased network efficiencies by 5%."



Polish up that resume!

AUTHOR(S): Hussain Jan

Education. Embrace your inner nerd. Show them what you've done.

- If you got the marks, let them know it here
- Include your awards, achievements, certifications, and scholarship here



Have a header. Keep it brief. Include your name and method of contact (email, phone, etc.).

Proofread! Nothing looks worse than saying you're ready for this job and then having 10 spelling mistakes in the next sentence

- Make your friends read it over. Your parents. Your goldfish. Your goldfish's parents.
- Do not go below font 10 and stay within margins
- Use a legible font like Arial.
- Don't cram, if there's too much info, only include the most important parts



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