# Lesson 8: Professional Writing

ENCP6000 Career Management for Engineers

LVX
VERITAS
VIRTVS

Northeastern University
**College of Engineering**

# **Learning Outcomes**

- Be familiar with the different types of <span style="color:red">professional writing</span> within the job search process

- Review templates and examples of professional writing

- Be able to write professionally with confidence

# **What is Professional Writing?**



All types of written communication used in and around the workplace

- Networking letter
- Thank you notes
- Emails from recruiters, employers, colleagues
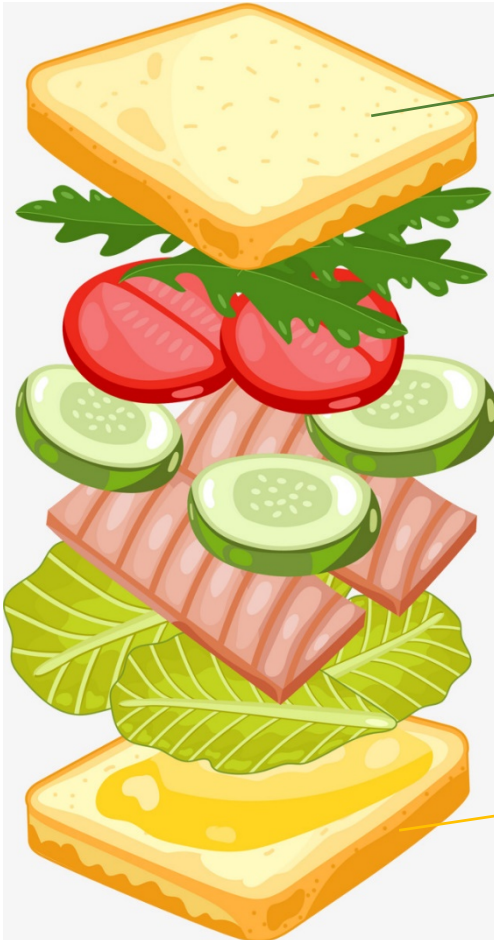
# Cover Letters

Why should I hire you?

Why are you interested in this job?

Why are you making a career/geography change?

Is there a relevant accomplishment you can share?

# Think Sandwich!

First paragraph – indicate the role you are interested in, and provide some basic information about you

Second paragraph – review your experience and qualifications; **make a connection to the job!**

Third paragraph – thank the employer for their consideration and leave it open for next steps

# Addressing Your Letter

Human Relations Department
Runkeeper
1 Winthrop Square
Boston, MA 02110

Mr. James Storey
Human Relations Department
Runkeeper
1 Winthrop Square
Boston, MA 02110

Mr. James Storey
Runkeeper
1 Winthrop Square
Boston, MA 02110

Runkeeper
1 Winthrop Square
Boston, MA 02110

Hiring Manager
Runkeeper
1 Winthrop Square
Boston, MA 02110

Dear Mr. Jones,

Dear Ms. Smith,

Dear Human Resources Recruiter,

Dear Human Resources,

Dear Hiring Manager,

Respectfully,

Sincerely,

- Don't assume the reader knows what you are talking about
- Don't ramble
- Don't use in appropriate humor

- Do check grammar and spelling
- Do use the same heading as your resume
- Do show your personality
- Do customize

# Cover Letter Sample and Review

- Let's look at a sample job description and its associated cover letter (see syllabus)

- Working with your group, critique the cover letter written by Sachin Shah for Trip Advisor (in the syllabus).

  – Are the three components included?

  – Has the applicant used an appropriate salutation and closing?

  – Has the student made specific connections to the job description?

  – Any other comments or feedback for Sachin?

**TripAdvisor Vacation Rentals Software Engineering Co-op** TripAdvisor, the market leader in travel research, is seeking a talented Software Engineer Co-op for the Vacation Rentals team in its Boston office at North Station. The Vacation Rentals team, a separate business unit within TripAdvisor, is building the next big product - making it easy for our customers to research and book vacation rental. As a Software Engineering co-op, your work will encompass the key areas of execution for the Vacation Rentals business including building APIs, micro-services, web UIs, native apps, all on a PCI compliant platform. We move quickly, projects are short (in average 3 days), and you will ship features every day used by millions of people. TripAdvisor is well known for having an extremely strong engineering organization ? you will be working with the best and getting stuff done, in the fastest growing area of an incredibly profitable, growing, fun company.

**Qualifications**
*   Working towards a BS or MS in Computer Science or equivalent
*    Be available for co-op January 2017- June 2017
*   You have a solid foundation in data structures, OO Design with rock-solid programming skills
*   You have some hands-on knowledge of Linux, Java, JavaScript and related open source technologies such as Apache, Tomcat, and MySQL
*   You have strong interpersonal skills, analytical skills, combined with intellectual curiosity. A desire and ability to "get things done" are essential requirements
*   You want to work in a rapidly changing, collaborative, and iterative product development environment

**SACHIN SHAH**

Hiring Manager
Human Relations Department TripAdvisor LLC
400 First Ave
Needham, MA 02494

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am writing to express my interest and apply for your job listing for a Software Engineer Co-op, which I found on Northeastern's Co-op network. I am a diligent, self-motivated and analytical computer systems engineering graduate student at Northeastern University. I enjoy being challenged and working on projects that require me to work outside my comfort zone and knowledge set, while continuing to learn new languages and develop techniques that are important to gain more practical experience and add to the success of an organization.

As a computer systems engineer, My technical expertise includes cross-platform proficiency (Windows, Linux), strong foundation in programming languages (including C, C++, C#, Java, and SQL); and advanced knowledge of developer applications, tools, methodologies and best practices (including OOD, web-development using open source technologies like Apache Tomcat, Spring MVC) and engineering big-data systems. I have a strong interest in information technology and business applications. The professional experience as a mainframe developer at Accenture for one year, helped me explore the domain of the use of technology to attain business goals. As a proactive and enthusiastic developer, my tasks included analyzing functional business requirements and managing all facets of product development lifecycle which includes developing of COBOL/DB2 applications using JCLs/PROCs. My active listening skills helped in handling problems and taking improvement advice. I have been repeatedly recognized for developing innovative solutions and have received appreciation for proving credible work which resulted in leading heights of achieving targets.

TripAdvisor is well known for having an extremely strong engineering organization who believes working with the best and valuing perfection. This is what excites me about working at TripAdvisor. I have excellent time management skills that help me to define priorities and implement activities tailored to meet deadlines. I am eager to face the challenges to develop creative and innovative systems solution for TripAdvisor.

I look forward discussing about this opportunity further with you. You can contact me at █████████████████████ Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sachin Shah

Posh started as a group passionate computer scientists looking to create and change the expectations of what is possible. With high hopes for conversational AI and the lack of tools available for it, the team at Posh set out to enable developers to easily leverage these advanced technologies and define the new way to interact with users.

**Qualifications:**
- Computer science background, or similar, with proficiency in Python and general software development practices
- This role will involve using Posh libraries and tools to design, implement, and test chatbot solutions using Pause, our Python-based programming language for chatbot scripting
- Strong proficiency in English and English grammar is a must
- Bilingual (esp. with Spanish, French, etc.) is a plus

Dear Hiring Manager,

"OK Google! Tell me a joke", "Hey Siri, Call Mom" - and probably a lot more requests are made by we humans to the AI assistants daily, and guess what, they obey each and every one of it (unlike we humans). Chatbots have become so real, that while ordering your favourite Basil Fried Rice with Crispy Chicken online, you won't even realize if you talked to a human being or a robot! I have been curious about the fact that how machines can think and learn like humans which led me to develop specific interests in deep learning technologies and trying to find solutions to such problems at scale.

I believe I will be a great fit for the Python Chatbot Engineer position because I have a significant experience developing production level scripts using Python.

I have experience working in the software industry for 3 years and this has helped me develop my analytical and problem-solving skills. Not only did it affect the way I approach problems, but also made me realize critical business considerations which needs to be made while developing a product. One of the unique traits of mine include developing a system keeping the end user in mind. For instance, a research journal I published in Springer required me to think from the perspective of the people diagnosed with the disease. Viewing the problem from the end user point of view gave me clarity about the approach I need to take for solving the problem and it acts as a motivating factor for other projects I undertake. I usually ask myself, is there a better way to do this task? How much will it affect the end-user? Is it simple or am I trying to make it more complex? Questions like that make me think about developing a product in a way in which it creates maximum user impact.

Having worked in a startup previously, I can develop a product end-to-end and design production grade scripts coupled with version control. Creating intelligent autonomous videos in this video first era is essential and I helped scale their video production rate from 30 videos / day to an average of 300 videos / day. What really excited me was the fact that I was creating an impact on millions of people while trying to help small business scale their processes. Currently, I am developing an automodeller software to suggest best machine learning algorithms given any dataset as part of my research work here at Northeastern University

I wanted to close with a quick story of Posh Technologies which make me more curious and excited. A day ago, I visited the Posh website, just to have a little conversation with "Poshie Bot". After about 15 mins of virtual conversation with Poshie, I came to know on what channels does Posh integrate with, what a conversational AI is, how it handles security, who are on the Post team and a whole lot of other stuff about Posh. I find it really exciting to see how can one strike a very human like conversation with an agent and I feel giving it more intelligence and life like effect is something I find it exciting enough to work on and that is the kind of work I want to be doing.

Thank you for taking the time to read my note, I am incredibly excited to have the opportunity to be considered for this position.

Sincerely,
Nikunj Lad

# Recruiters

Sometimes Recruiters or Human Resources Representative to reach out directly regrading a job opportunity, interview, or offer.
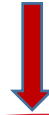
It is important that you:
- Confirm it is not a scam
- Are not being offered contract work (you are not able to accept contract work)
- Are not sharing personal information prior to an offer (passport, SSN, Visa documents, etc…)

If something seems odd don't hesitate to reach out to your co-op advisor!
Throughout all your communication is it important to correspond professionally.

From: ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨

Date: Thu, 18 Jul 2019 at 1:16 PM

Subject: POPULUS GROUP: Job Opprotunity - Medtronic, Inc.

To: ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨

Hello ▨▨▨▨

You were referred to us by the Medtronic, Inc Program Office for a contract position. I understand they would like to extend this role to you. If you choose to proceed with the offer, Populus Group will become your employer and handle all of your human resource needs, all payroll and expense processing, and you will have the option to participate in several benefits designed for contingent workers.

I would like to schedule a 15 minute call with you to walk through the job specifics, onboarding process, and to answer any questions you have, please let me know what day and time works best for you.

I look forward to speaking with you.

# Contract Work

# Emails from Recruiters

How to respond

- If a job description is included, review it to see if you are interested and respond to confirm interest in next steps
- If a job description is not included, respond asking for details on the position
- If the recruiter wants to talk to you about contract or full time positions, politely decline and let them know you are interested in intern opportunities

# Scheduling an Interview

# We would love to bring you in for an interview! When are you available?

A. I'm available tomorrow!

B. I'm available Monday at 4pm.

C. I'm available next week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday any time between 12pm-5pm.

D. I'm currently out of the country, and will be available in two months.

E. ….no response

F. I am not available until after 1:00 tomorrow because I have a doctor's appointment at 11:00 and then need to do my laundry.

# We would love to bring you in for an interview! When are you available?

A. I'm available tomorrow!

B. I'm available Monday at 4pm

C. I'm available Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday

D. I'm currently... I will be available...

E. ....no response

Does not provide employer with enough time to schedule arrangements

# We would love to bring you in for an interview! When are you available?

A. I'm available tomorrow!

B. I'm available Monday at 4pm

C. I'm available next week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursd...

Too limited - does not provide employer flexibility

D. I'm cur... availab...

E. ....no response

# We would love to bring you in for an interview! When are you available?

A. I'm available tomorrow!

B. I'm av~~a~~

C. I'm av~~a~~ ~~y,~~ and ~~Thursday any time between 12pm-5pm~~

Too far out - does not provide employer flexibility

D. I'm currently out of the country, and will be available in two months

E. ....no response

# We would love to bring you in for an interview! When are you available?

A. I'm available tomorrow!

B. I'm available Monday at 4pm

C. I'm available next week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday any time between 12pm-5pm

D. I'm currently ~~unavailable~~ available in two months

Ummmmm...definitely not

E. ....no response

F. I am not available until after 1:00 tomorrow because I have a doctor's appointment at 11:00 and then need to do my laundry.

# We would love to bring you in for an interview! When are you available?

A. I'm available tomorrow!

B. I'm available Monday at 4pm

C. I'm available next week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday any time between 12pm-5pm

D. I'm ~~on the rest of the semester and will be~~ available in tw~~~~

E. ....n~~~~

F. I am not available until after 1:00 tomorrow because I have a doctor's appointment at 11:00 and then need to do my laundry.

Ding! Ding! Ding! We have a winner!!

**From:** ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨
**Date:** May 29, 2019 at 18:00:33 EDT
**To:** ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨
**Subject: Re: RevTwo Internship**

Hi,
I just checked, please schedule my interview any other day then 5th. I have some errands to run on that day. I will be free after 4 on that day.

On Wed, May 29, 2019, 4:44 PM ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨ wrote:

> Hi dave,
> Thank you for reaching out to me. Yes I should be available on 5th. Please suggest a time when I shall come for the interview.
>
> On Wed, May 29, 2019, 4:25 PM ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨ wrote:
>
>> Dear ▨▨▨▨
>>
>> We posted internship positions through your Co-Op program and received your response. We are interested in interviewing you if you are still available to work with us and help build this exciting AI company. We would like to meet you in person at our offices at 745 Atlantic Avenue (across the street from South Station) on Wednesday June 5. Please let us know if you are available that day and we will respond with a time. We would expect the interview to last 90 minutes.
>>
>> We look forward to meeting you.
>>
>> Kind Regards,

# Don't include…

- Information about your personal appointments

- Details regarding scheduling conflicts

- Questions about salary, relocation expenses, housing, commute, benefits, vacation time, before offer

- Questions about what the job entails
  - Except when you receive a cold outreach from a recruiter

# Respond to an employer!

- In pairs, write a response to the following prompt:
  - Thank you for your interest in the Software Developer Co-op position at Nokia. We would like to move forward with your resume and schedule a 30 minute phone screening. Please let us know some dates and times next week that you are available.

- Hand your response to your partner

- Partners – did your peer respond well?

# **A possible response is…..**

Hi NAME OF CONTACT,

Thank you for extending me the opportunity to interview for the Software Developer Co-op position at Nokia. The following is my availability for a phone screening next week:

Tuesday 8/6: 3PM-5PM

Wednesday 8/7: 10AM-12PM

Friday 8/9: 1PM-2PM

Please let me know if you need me to provide additional availability. I look forward to speaking with you.

Best,

YOUR NAME

# Once Interview is Confirmed

Hi NAME OF CONTACT,

Thank you for confirming the interview for Wednesday, 8/7 at 11AM. The best number to reach me at during this time is 617-123-4567. I look forward to our conversation!

Best,

YOUR NAME

# Tips & Tricks

- Mirror the language of your contact for concise communication

- Ask who is interviewing you, if information is NOT provided

- Put this interview on your calendar and research transportation to the company ahead of time

- Start drafting thank you email in advance

# Thank You Email

- Many people have taken the time to review your resume and invite you to learn more about the role and to learn about you

- Used to thank the interviewers and reaffirm your interest in the position

- Demonstrates professional behavior

- ALWAYS send a thank you email within 24 hours for any and ALL interviews (phone screens include!)

# Consider the Following…

When writing your thank you email, reflect on these questions:

- Was there a response you could improve on?
    - Did you forget to mention a skill or leave something else out?
- What skills or qualifications do they seem to emphasize?
    - Reinforce them!
- What stuck out to you in response to your questions?
- Look at the notes you took during your interview! They will help personalize each of your thank you emails.
- Only 4% of candidates send them – stand out!

Subject: Thank you – Software Developer Co-op Interview

Hi NAME,

Thank you for meeting with me to discuss my candidacy for the Software Developer Co-op position at Nokia. I enjoyed speaking with you about [SPECIFICS YOU DISCUSSED REGARDING THE ROLE]. I also appreciated learning [INCLUDE A PERSONALIZED PIECE YOU LEARNED FROM THE INTERVIEW]. I am very excited at the possibility of joining your team and using the skills I have to further develop within Nokia.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if there is additional information you would like me to provide. I look forward to speaking with you about the next steps.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

# Referrals

- When looking for referrals, you first need to:
  - Reach out to people you know who can attest to your skills
  - Give them a very brief reason for reaching out

**Do not reach out to random people you do not know and request a referral.  They do not know you and cannot speak to your skills and character.**

# Assignment



You will be writing several pieces of job-related correspondence.

All information is in your syllabus.

This assignment is due November 13.