

***THE***

***IS / IT***

***Employment Package***

***Resumes, References and Cover Letters***

# Resume Comments

Everybody has an opinion about what a resume should contain and how it ought to look. Keeping in mind that there is no “right” answer to those questions, I’m going to present a perspective here that will let you make your own decisions; after all, it’s going to be YOUR resume.

The resume is a fact sheet that should provide the reader with facts about you that will let them determine if you are worth the time and effort to interview. Keep this, and some of the other things I’m about to tell you in mind as you create your resume. Since you’re using this fact sheet as a means to convey your worth to an employer it probably makes sense to determine what it is that would be most valuable to those with whom you wish to speak. The two primary factors that interest most employers are knowledge and experience. So determine which of your attributes is the bigger seller, if you have a choice, and place that first. With respect to education it is important to make it clear what the course of study that you completed entailed. Business and IS/IT curriculums vary considerably. Make it clear to the reader the type of program from which you graduated. You should note in the samples provided that course listings are used to accomplish this goal.

**Note – The program at Old Dominion is very technical for a College of Business. Your course work reflects this and is a major asset to you, use it!**

In terms of your experience focus on the skills that you have acquired during any work you have been paid to perform. Don’t limit yourself to IT skills alone. Try to think of skills that are “transferable”. If you **supervised** other people, or **solved problems**, or **interacted with the public**, these are skills needed in the IT world, let potential employers know about them.

The length and look of your resume are subjective issues that boil down to effectiveness. Use a length, one page, two pages, or more, that is sufficient to convey the facts. The appearance of the resume should make it easy to find what you want to have found. For instance, you can **bold** or *italicize* words you want picked out by the reader, **not** section identifiers that convey nothing material. You can also use columns to list multiple items so they can be more easily seen. Keep in mind that many potential employers are older (like me) and can’t read 10-pitch font. Having your name in slightly larger font (16 pitch) and bolded is also helpful, as an interviewer will typically use it during an interview to generate

questions and call you by name. Another standard in most resumes is to provide contact information. Make certain this information is **correct**. Including an e-mail address is also useful. If you do provide an e-mail address make sure it is a professional one, [Hottotrot@aol.com](mailto:Hottotrot@aol.com) is **NOT** professional.

Note that all the samples have a “professional objective”. Employers seem to like seeing an objective on a resume. My advice is to include one that is so broad that it doesn’t limit or exclude you from consideration of anything. However, if you wish to exclude yourself, say from programming positions, or conversely want to do only a very specific type of work, feel free to narrow your object, but be aware of the potential ramifications.

The comments and resumes that follow are loosely based on some generic profiles. They are generic for individuals that have educational experience only, intern experience, “other-field” experience and professional IT experience. Since, as IT majors, you “KNOW” that one size does not fit all. It is recommended that you peruse all of the samples and associated comments to **fit them to you**, and not vice versa.

**Educational Experience Only Resume Sample 1** – This resume presents an individual that has little or no professional IT experience, but has a solid academic background (note the accounting minor). Also note the GPA is listed because it is high (above 3.0), if yours is under 3.0 I recommend leaving it off. As an alternative you may consider including your “major GPA” if it is above a 3.0. The limited business experience, which appropriately appears after the educational facts, highlights the skills that can be applied to any industry and therefore “sell”, training, for example, is a transferable skill.

**Intern Experience Resume Sample 2** - This resume is a variation that represents someone with intern experience in IT that has been dressed-up in columns to keep to a single page and provide more information. Notice the constraining career objective, the individual wanted to get into a particular IT niche (networking). And, not surprisingly in our industry, has since moved on to working in other areas in IT.

**Other-Field Experience Resume Sample 3** – This resume is reflective of someone who has come back to get their degree at a later age, the so-called non-traditional student. The key in most cases is to present a clear picture of the shift in your career direction while highlighting those skills that have been obtained

and can transfer to the new career path.

**IT-Field Experience Resume Sample 4** - This resume describes someone who has a professional IT background. It presents an individual who is coming back to get their degree or augment their IT knowledge with business knowledge. Typically, it reflects a situation where someone is being held back by his or her lack of an undergraduate degree or a lack of business/managerial knowledge. Note that the work experience shows a progression of responsibility, something that should be emphasized when possible.

## Education Only Sample 1

*NAME*

**Address**

**E-Mail**

PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVE To acquire a position in an Information Systems environment that will provide for both technical and professional growth.

EDUCATION Bachelor of Science in **Business Administration**,  
May 1999, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA  
Major Field of Study: **Information Technology** (IT)  
Major GPA: 3.94/4.0 - Dean's List  
Minor Field of Study: **Accounting**  
Minor GPA: 3.5/4.0

COURSE WORK

JAVA
Web-based Development
Advanced C++
Intermediate Accounting
IT Project Management
Networking
Database Management
Systems Analysis
Cost Accounting
Systems Design

SOFTWARE

UNIX
C++
COBOL
JAVA
Visible
Analyst (CASE Tool)
System Architect (CASE Tool)
Corel Flow

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE Created numerous system models to define and analyze business systems using two different Computer-Assisted System Engineering (CASE) products. This included the creation of **process models**, **data models**, and **functional decomposition diagrams**. All of these models were created in the context of learning and applying analysis and design techniques within a system development methodology.

ORGANIZATIONS Member, Academic Honors Program  
Treasurer, Academic Honors Association  
\* Outstanding Performance Award (19XX)  
Secretary, Association of Information Technology Professionals  
Member, Golden Key National Honor Society

***References Available Upon Request***

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## NAME \_\_\_\_\_

### Address

## E-Mail

## PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVE

A position in a telecommunication services environment utilizing computing and telecommunication skills.

## EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in **Business Administration**, December 20XX,  
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA  
Major Field of Study: **Information Technology** (IT)  
Major GPA 3.3/4.0 Dean's List

## COURSE WORK

JAVA                      Web-based Development  
Advanced C++                      Database  
Management  
Systems Analysis                      IT Project Management  
Systems Design

## SOFTWARE

UNIX C++  
COBOL  
Excel  
JAVA Visible  
Analyst (CASE Tool)

Corel Draw

System Architect ool)

## WORK VA EXPERIENCE

*Administrator*

**Old Dominion University, Norfolk,**

Fall 200X  
*Computer Resource Center*

Supplied technical computer information, guidance, and instruction to the various students, faculty, and staff concerning PC and mainframe problems or concerns and provided on-site computer services

Summer 199X  
Local Area Network Administrator  
Aided in establishing, maintaining,

updating various local area networks  
Updated and reconfigured hardware  
components for computer systems

Spring 199X  
*Computer Laboratory Consultant*  
 Assisted student and faculty members  
 with various software applications

XXXXXXX & RADIO, Norfolk, VA

Fall 199X

Producer/Director (Volunteer)

Produced and directed the Electronic Classroom - Computer Science 450/550

Summer and Fall 199X

*Engineering Associate (Volunteer)*

Provided engineering support in the areas of audio, video, and satellite communications

Performed various electrical functions such as running wire and cable, constructing connectors, soldering electrical connections.

**Business X, Portsmouth, VA**

Summer and Fall 199X

*Store Manager (Cooperative Education)*

Controlled and oversaw store operations and store activities

## ASSOCIATIONS

### Association of Information

Machinery  
Students of America

**Technology Professionals**  
Vice-President Association Computer  
Outstanding College  
Golden Key National Honor Society

Sigma Phi Epsilon  
Risk Management Committee  
Philanthropy Committee  
Social Committee  
Surfrider Foundation

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Portfolio Available Upon Request

## Other-Field Sample 3

**NAME**

**Address**

**E-Mail**

**PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVE:** To secure a challenging position in the computer industry field which provides the opportunity for upward mobility and compensation based upon quality of performance.

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor of Science in **Business Administration**  
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA, May 200X  
Major Field of Study, **Information Technology (IT)**  
Major GPA: **3.74**

Associate of Science in **Business Administration**  
Tidewater Community College, Portsmouth, VA, May 199X  
(**Cum Laude**)

<b>COURSE WORK:</b>	C++ Programming and Applications	Networking
	Object Oriented C++ Programming	Accounting Information Systems
	Systems Analysis/Modeling	Systems Design/Implementation
	Web-based Application Development	Computer Architecture
	Relational Database with <b>SQL</b>	Database Administration

**SOFTWARE:** JAVA Visual Basic C++ SQL **CASE Tool**

Obtained educational experience with the Computer-Assisted **Software Engineering** product "System Architect". Created numerous process and data models in the course of system's analysis and design. Versed in the functional decomposition of complex business operations and subsequent improvement.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Customer Service Representative, xxx *Sales*. Norfolk, VA, 199X to present. Duties include assisting in all phases of customer account support. Currently responsible for performing product sales using custom application software and for



*training* other service representatives in the use of the software.

Customer Account Representative, Productivity Computer Training Inc., Chesapeake, VA, 199X to 199X. Co-operative educational position through Tidewater Community College that *assisted clients* with Accounts Payable programs and Payroll programs that had been developed specifically for their requirements.

Customer Sales Representative, Stiener Inc., Portsmouth, VA, 198X to 199X. Specialized in cleaning and reconstruction of Supa-Flu heat drafting systems. Included obtaining permits and construction of complete system for homeowners. *Supervised several employees* in the identification of defective heat drafting systems, removal of the system, implementation of new system.

## ACTIVITIES

President, Association of Information Technology Professionals, Old Dominion University, 199X, conducted student chapter meetings, scheduled industry individuals as presenters at student chapter meetings, successfully planned and initiated student chapter fund-raising event.

*Awarded AITP Most Outstanding IT Student (199X-199X) by IT Discipline*

*Awarded AITP Most Outstanding Member (199X-199X) by IT Discipline*

Vice President, Association of Information Technology Professionals, Old Dominion University, 199X. Tracked student chapter members' attendance at all activities. Coordinated student chapter meetings for President.

Software Application Instructor, XYZ Corporation. Instruct co-workers on use of interactive software that assists in providing customers with services to meet needs based on clues provided.

Evaluation Chairman, Eastern Officials Association, Volleyball Committee, 199X. *Coordinate and conduct training* for volleyball officials in the Tidewater area. *Perform written and oral evaluations* of same officials for the purpose of increasing their abilities and knowledge of the game.

Chairperson, Constitution Committee, Eastern Officials Association, 19XX. *Proposed amendments of the constitution and by-laws* of the corporation that were forwarded to the membership for passage.

## IT-Field Sample 4

**NAME**

**Address**

**E-Mail**

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Science in **Business Administration**  
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA, May 200X  
Major Field of Study, ***Information Technology (IT)***  
Major GPA: **3.74**

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Programmer /Analyst**, XYZ Consulting. Norfolk, VA, 199X to present. Primary duties include determination and documentation of customer requirements in the creation of new business applications. Specific responsibilities include, directing project teams in the development and testing of new software systems, communicating with system users, and

**Programmer**, ABC Corporation. Alexandria, VA, 199X to 199X. Primary duties included creating and testing software from design specifications. Specific responsibilities included, working as part of a programming team to create application software, developing system documentation and

**Technical Support**, PDQ Incorporated. Richmond, VA, 1989 to 199Xpresent. Primary duties included staffing the company trouble desk. Specific responsibilities included, assisting system users in solving software problems, fixing hardware problems and modifying system configurations, as needed.

### TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Proficient in the following system platforms and languages:

AS 400  
UNIX

Assembly  
C++

ColdFusion  
Sequel Server

JAVA

## EDUCATIONAL COURSE WORK:

C++ Programming and Applications	Networking
Object Oriented C++ Programming	Accounting Information Systems
Systems Analysis/Modeling	Systems Design/Implementation
Web-based Application Development	Computer Architecture
Relational Database with <b>SQL</b>	Database Administration

## PROFESSIONAL AFILIATIONS:

Association of Information Technology Professionals  
Association Computer Machinery  
Outstanding College Students of America  
Golden Key National Honor Society

Sigma Phi Epsilon

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References and Additional Information Available Upon Request

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# Reference Sheet Comments

The reference sheet should come with you to any interview. It should contain four to six references on it. Select these references from a cross section of people you know, friends of the family, professional acquaintances, social contacts, etc. Spread the references around as much as you can. Keep in mind the impression your reference will make if contacted over the phone. The contacting party will imbue the reference with characteristics they will apply to you. Consider this fact in your selection. Always ask a potential reference if they mind serving as one and ask them if they will give a positive reference if contacted. Don't assume you know the answer to that last question.

## REFERENCES

**Jimmie Carraway**  
**Senior Lecturer/  
IT Consultant**      **College of Business and**

**Old Dominion University**  
**Information Technology Discipline**

**Public Administration**  
**(737) 683-4345 (Office)**

**Name**  
**District Manager**

**Company Name**  
**xxxx Tidewater Drive**  
**Norfolk, VA 23505**  
**(757) xxx-xxxxx (Office)**

**Dr. Whomever**      **Old Dominion University**  
**Associate Professor of**  
**Information Technology**

**Information Systems Department**  
**College of Business and**  
**Public Administration**  
**(757) 440-XXXX (Office)**

**Name**  
**Family Friend**      **Williamsburg, VA 23185**

**xxx Barchment Blvd.**  
  
**(757) xxx-xxxx**

**Name**  
**Realtor**

**Xxx Sandy Springs Ln.**  
**Virginia Beach, VA 23452**  
**(757) xxx-xxxx**



# Cover letter Comments

Your cover letter is the “personality” that you provide with your fact sheet (resume). It should be short, but powerful. I recommend a 3 (for those with no work experience) to 4-paragraph letter. The first paragraph should introduce you and explain the reason for your letter. Two or three sentences will generally suffice.

The third paragraph should be the “thank you” paragraph that will include a contact number. Two or three sentences will generally suffice.

The middle paragraph(s) are where you put in the most effort. These are the “I love me” paragraphs, where you tell the reader why they should contact you instead of other candidates. In these paragraphs you “sell” yourself by letting the reader know what attributes (personal and professional) set you apart. This can include your relevant experience, drive and ambition, attention to detail, love for programming, ability to solve problems, or **anything** you can think of that a potential employer would want in an employee. Have fun with these paragraphs; it can be insightful to think of yourself in this regard. Have a friend read it over and get feedback. Generally six or seven sentences are enough.

Type your name and **sign the letter!**

I’ve applied the same philosophy to cover letters that I did to resumes, educational experience only, intern experience, other-field experience and prior IT experience. And again I’ve tried to stress the things that put the best face on what “sells” employers.

**Educational Experience Only Cover Letter Sample 1** – This cover letter presents an individual that has no professional IT experience, but has a solid academic background. Generally a 3-paragraph letter will suffice, but, it is a judgment call on your part. If you feel you want to say more, do so. However, I’d be sensitive to boring the reader or giving the impression of adding “fluff” for the sake of adding bulk.

**Intern Experience Cover Letter Sample 2** - This cover letter is for those who obtained some IT experience through an internship or some IT work experience, usually while in school. Many of the points made in the prior example can be applied here. In addition, however, I’ve added a fourth paragraph dedicated to the intern/work experience. Emphasis is on the practical application of the experience and should be “sold” aggressively, but honestly.

**Other-Field Experience Cover Letter Sample 3** – This resume is reflective of someone who has either come back to get their degree at a later age, the so-called non-traditional student or someone who is getting a second degree in a new field and changing career direction. The key in both cases is to present a clear picture of the shift in direction while highlighting those transferable skills that can enhance the potential for success in their new career path.

**IT-Field Experience Cover Letter Sample 4** - This cover letter is reflective of someone who has a professional IT background. It presents someone who is coming back to get their degree or augment their IT knowledge with business knowledge. Typically, it reflects a situation where someone is held back by his or her lack of an undergraduate degree or a lack of business/managerial knowledge. Notice how the lack of a college degree can limit an individual's ability to advance professionally even with extensive and progressive IT experience.

# **Education-Only Cover Letter Sample 1**

Ms. ??????  
XXXX Financial Corporation  
P.O. Box XXX  
Norfolk, VA 23501

Dear (find a name),

I have recently graduated from Old Dominion University and am interested in pursuing a career in the field of information systems.

As an information technology graduate, I believe my academic preparation provides me with the skills and abilities you are seeking. The IS and other management courses at Old Dominion require the completion of numerous programs and projects utilizing analytical skills and programming abilities. The IT curriculum also emphasizes professionalism and the importance of meeting deadlines. I enjoy working with people and analyzing systems using CASE Tools. I would like to learn more about the field of data processing and feel that a career in this field can fulfill my desire for professional growth and development.

As a management information systems and accounting graduate, I believe my academic preparation provides me with the skills and abilities you are seeking. The IT and other management courses at Old Dominion University require the completion of numerous programs and projects utilizing analytical skills and programming abilities. The Old Dominion University IT and Accounting curricula also emphasize professionalism and the importance of meeting deadlines. I enjoy the challenge of programming and have been programming since high school. I would like to learn more about the professions of Information Technology and/or Accounting and feel that a civil service career in either profession can fulfill my desire for professional growth and development.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and my attached resume and for any consideration you can give to my qualifications. If you need any further information, please contact me at (804) xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

NAME



# **Intern Experience Cover Letter Sample 2**

Ms. ???????  
XXXX Financial Corporation  
P.O. Box XXX  
Norfolk, VA 23501

Dear (find a name),

I have recently graduated from Old Dominion University and am interested in pursuing a career in the field of information systems.

I will be graduating from Old Dominion University in May with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. My major field of study is in Information Systems and Technology. I have worked diligently to learn the technologies and methodologies associated with my chosen field and want to expand my knowledge in this exciting discipline by obtaining a challenging Information Technology position. I feel that the internship at XXXXX will help me to achieve this goal.

Several key attributes have enabled me to excel at Old Dominion University and in the job setting as well. Going to school and working full time has helped me to obtain strong organizational skills and has taught me to productively use the limited time available to me. I have worked at becoming an analytical problem-solver who is very detail-oriented. I enjoy working with people both individually and in group settings. Based on my skills and abilities, I am certain that I can make a real contribution to XXXX.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and attached resume and for any consideration you can give to my qualifications. If you need any further information, please contact me at (804) 588-5797.

Sincerely,

NAME

# **Other-Field Experience Cover Letter Sample 3**

Ms. ???????  
XXXX We can Get It Done Corporation  
P.O. Box XXX  
Norfolk, VA 23501

Dear (find a name),

My name is XXXXX and I have recently (am graduating) graduated from Old Dominion University with a major in Information Systems and Technology and am interested in pursuing a career in the field of information technology. As you may be able to see from the accompanying resume, my professional background is not specifically in the IT field. My intent, however, is to transition to this new career with all of the skill and energy I brought/bring to my prior/current career.

My reasons for wanting to become an IT professional are pretty straightforward. I increasingly found in my prior work that I most enjoyed the challenge of problem solving and the technology that was available to assist in that regard. Returning to college to pursue studies in information technology and the art/science that uses it to help businesses do business more competitively has only reinforced my desire to continue down this path professionally.

While my formal education has provided me with many new skills and a great deal of knowledge, what I can bring to (company name) is the maturity and experience that enhances these recently acquired skills. I am a self-motivated individual that can work both autonomously and as a member of a team. I have good people skills and am tenacious when it comes to staying on a task until the work is done. I believe that given the opportunity, I can be a productive asset for (company name) and would welcome the chance to prove it.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and attached resume and for any consideration you can give to my qualifications. If you need any further information, please contact me at (757) xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

NAME

# **Professional IT Experience**

## **Cover Letter**

### **Sample 4**

Ms. ???????  
XXXX Financial Corporation  
P.O. Box XXX  
Norfolk, VA 23501

Dear ( find a name),

My name is \*\*\*\*\* and I wish to inquire about employment with XXX Financial Corporation as a Database Administrator.

As you can see from my resume I have extensive experience in IT with a significant amount of experience in relational database design, implementation and management. I recently chose to return to college to complete my undergraduate education to enhance my career opportunities and take full advantage of my professional capabilities.

My IT experience is fairly diverse and it has afforded me the opportunity to interact with system users across a broad spectrum of application areas. I have developed numerous system designs and have successfully managed new development projects. Being challenged to perform and succeeding is a key part of my professional make-up and I look forward to the next opportunity to do so. I believe my combination of managerial experience and technical expertise coupled with my ambition to be successful in my work can provide XYZ Corporation with a valuable and productive resource.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and attached resume and for any consideration you can give to my qualifications. I can be reached locally at 465-xxxx until X/23/04. After this, I can be reached at (214) 306-xxxx. Please send any correspondence in the strictest confidence.

Sincerely,

NAME

# THE INTERVIEW

Congratulations, you got the interview. Now you can start worrying...or not. Interviews can be stressful, but they don't have to be. Most of the stress that most of us feel about the interviewing process is a result of either being judged and/or dealing with the unknown. With a little attitude adjustment and pre-interview preparation, however, much of the stress can be reduced to manageable levels. In the sections below I have provided some (hopefully) helpful suggestions.

**Attitude** – It isn't everything, but it is certainly a "thing". If you don't have any, try to find some. I said "some". Too much "attitude" can be as detrimental as none. Let me explain. Employers generally look to hire people who can learn and contribute. They know that a good "can do" attitude can overcome a lot of shortcomings in someone's skill set. This makes it important to convey a sense of confidence, that given the opportunity, you can get the job done. After all, that is effectively the bottom line in the hiring process.

Along the lines of attitude, but maybe more in the vein of perspective, it is important to recognize the two-way street the interview process "ought" to be. If you think in terms of **them** interviewing **you**, you place yourself at a disadvantage with them having total control of the evaluation process. In addition to placing yourself in a position of weakness you will likely increase that "stress thing" to the point where it gets in the way of allowing you to show what assets and abilities set you apart as a candidate. Consequently, I recommend you approach the process with the mindset that **you** are there to interview **them**, as well as, be interviewed by them. The truth is; they will do what they do according to their plan (or lack thereof). You, therefore, need your own plan. Have questions you want answers to. Be focused on gaining a feel for the organization to see if it fits your needs, maybe even your personality. In essence, try to make it as much of a 50/50 proposition as possible.

If this seems like a risky or arrogant perspective to adopt I can only say that all employment strategies have inherent risk. If your focus is on simply trying to not do or say the wrong thing you greatly increase the risk and reduce the probability of being successful. Having said that, I appreciate and understand that there are times where we "NEED" a job, and as the saying goes, "beggars can't be choosers". However, a bad employment match is painful for all involved parties. This includes you and the employer, plus all the other players in an employment disaster. Husbands, wives, significant others and co-workers pay a heavy price for our bad employment choices. It

has been my experience that healthy, mature organizations appreciate potential employees working with them to insure that a good, mutually rewarding match is made in the hiring process.

The best key to insuring that that good match is made is pretty simple. Be honest. After the issue of money, which I'll discuss later, the most asked question I get on the interview process is, "what should I say?" And honesty is the best policy. Consider the ramifications of being dishonest in your interaction during the interview for the purpose of saying what you **think** the interviewer wants to hear. Scenario one, you guess about what responses they may be seeking and eliminate yourself from consideration by guessing badly. Scenario two, you guess well and give answers they like even though your responses don't reflect your true thoughts on the matter. Congratulations, you're hired. You're hired into an organization that thinks they are getting an "A" when you are clearly a "B". Nice job, hope you continue to guess well for the duration of your employment, if you do, you will earn every penny they pay you. Ouch. This brings us back to honesty as a potentially more appealing option.

By honesty, however, I don't mean you should reveal your inner most thoughts on politics, religion, and sexual orientation. Rather you should be clear on work related issues that reflect who you are. For example, if when asked if you are available to work nights and weekends, if necessary, don't say you are if you are not (perhaps do to child care or an agreement with your partner). And hoping you won't be asked to do so is not a good strategy, they asked for a reason. Of course, the consequences to being clear on what you will, or won't agree to, can eliminate you from consideration, but (see above) there are worse things.

**Preparation** – So you have a good attitude and you plan to be as honest as possible (with them **AND** yourself). What can you do to prepare? Lots. You're about to deal with an organization. Research them. Nothing is free. You must put some time and energy into learning who they are. In analysis we call this doing our homework. Be an analyst and dig a little or a lot. Are they growing, stagnant, old, or young? Organizations, like people, have personalities.