

Marketing Me

FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS STUDENTS

Condea Krewenki

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Preface

This workbook has been developed to assist college students to plan their careers and develop their portfolios. It is a compilation of information and activities to guide students through these processes. It has been developed as a resource to be used along with classes or workshops that are led by an instructor/facilitator to provide further direction on the activities. Most of the content has been developed or selected based on my experience with students and what they “need to know” to plan their careers and market themselves to potential employers.

Some of the material contained here has been developed by others and credit is given for sources as appropriate. Some of the content on portfolio development has been inspired by the Nova Scotia Community College’s work on portfolio development. This workbook is a continual work-in-progress, and any feedback or ideas for improvement would be greatly appreciated.

Condea Krewenki
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Reflection: Where you have been and who you are

"It's time to start living the life we've imagined." - Henry James

How to do Reflective Narratives

From NSCC's Student Portfolio Guide, and included with permission from Catherine MacLean, Vice President, People & Planning

While you are developing your portfolio, you will hear your teachers and classmates talk about reflective narratives. The Student Guide refers to “reflective learning”. This may sound strange, even scary and many people have difficulty starting the process. However, just like any new skill you learn the more practice you get the easier it becomes. In this case, it may not be as strange or scary as you think.

What is reflection?

A reflective narrative is a thought, idea or opinion formed as a result of your thinking about yourself. Reflective learning often happens as a result of answering the question “Why?” For example, someone asks you “What do you want to be?” You reply “A welder!” The same person asks: “Why do you want to be a welder?” You reply...

Just think about looking in a mirror. You know that when you look in the mirror you see your reflection. This is a picture of your external self or your physical being. Through reflective narratives, your mirror is a little different – it is your internal self. You are using your mind or your thoughts to learn more about yourself as a person. For example, why you do the things you do, what makes you happy or sad, how do you learn new skills, what causes you problems in learning new skills, and so on.

Remember only a small part of your learning occurs in the classroom. You gain knowledge and new skills on the basketball team, working at a fast food outlet, baby-sitting, etc. These skills make up the picture of who you are, and are transferable to other settings.

How do I start?

The best way to start is to start small and to start with things that you are most comfortable with. For example, take a moment to think about the following:

1. Why did you choose to take a particular program at NSCC?
2. What knowledge, skills and abilities do you bring with you to NSCC?
3. What do you hope to do after you graduate from NSCC?
4. Where do you see yourself in five years time?

Now, once you have thought about these questions, you can

- jot down your thoughts on a piece of paper;
- tell someone else;
- record your key points on a cassette tape; or
- even draw a picture.

Congratulations! You have just gone through the reflective process.

If you get in the habit of thinking about all that you have learned and how that learning connects, it will become much easier to put your thoughts on paper. Ask yourself these questions:

1. What did I learn today?
2. What mistakes did I make?
3. How did I correct my mistakes?
4. What topic did I find most difficult to understand and why?
5. What topic did I find easiest to understand and why?
6. How did I work with my other classmates?
7. How does this connect with your past experience?
8. Any other questions you may have.

These are all examples of how you can reflect and learn more about yourself. This is the beginning of an incredible journey. It is a part of what we call “portfolio learning”.

Learning Narratives

This is a reflective learning activity, and it requires a lot of thought and reflection on past experiences.

Five Step Approach

1. Consider the examples, activities, and discussions in class.
2. Think about some times or situations in your life when you learned something you consider valuable. List some of these as possible ideas or topics for your learning narrative. These may be from work, school, volunteer or family settings.
3. Decide which of these ideas would make a good learning narrative. Consider the following.
 - Are you proud of this event/learning/accomplishment?
 - Are you comfortable sharing it with instructors and employers?
 - Will it strengthen your portfolio?
 - Can you clearly list / describe what you **learned** from this event?
4. Select one these ideas and work it through into a learning narrative. You should begin with an outline of your main points. It should be written in the first person because it is a narrative. Consider:
 - How to summarize the learning experience or situation into one to three sentences.
 - What did you know (skills, knowledge, attitudes) before the experience?
 - What did you learn (skills, knowledge, attitudes) from this experience or situation?
 - What skills or knowledge or change in attitude do you want to communicate through this narrative?
5. Get feedback by asking someone to read or listen to your narrative, and answer these questions.
 - Can you pick out the learning? What is it?
 - Is the learning experience/situation summarized in few sentences at most?
 - Does it clearly state what you knew before the experience?
 - Is it organized in a logical way?
 - Does it need more or less detail?
 - Are there any grammatical errors that need to be fixed?

NOTE: Proofread your narrative very carefully because your writing skills are being evaluated as much as the content. You should not have any errors in any of the topics we have covered this term.

Life Line

The life line will help you begin thinking about where you have been in preparation for developing your portfolio. It is often included in a portfolio, although it is not required.

Simply put, it is a year-by-year account of significant events in your life. You can decide where to begin – perhaps high school graduation, birth, or when you started school – depending on how old you are and how many entries you have to include. For each year, list what you consider to be the important happenings in your life. Include one or two sentences for each year listed. You do not have to include an entry for every year.

You might include information or events such as:

- employment and promotions
- education / graduation
- seminars/workshops attended
- awards or achievements
- volunteer involvement
- military service
- major life events (marriage, births, big moves, divorce, deaths in family)
- anything else that is relevant to you or has had an impact on your life

The more information you include, the more helpful your Life Line will be as you identify significant learning experiences. You should include as much info as you can think of in your first version. Later on, when you are finalizing your portfolio, you can edit your Life Line to include only the items you'd like to share with an employer, if you choose to include it.

IMPORTANT: Pay attention to your grammar and spelling. For each entry you should use point from starting with an action verb. These should not be complete sentences nor should they be writing in the first person by including "I" at the beginning of each one.

For example:

1998 Started playing on the high school hockey team at Sackville High School

Skills Self-Assessment

Most of us possess well over 500 skills, but many of them are so much a part of our nature that we are hardly aware of them. Becoming aware of them and relating them to work opportunities is a key part in marketing yourself. In thinking about the skills you have to offer, consider your:

Experience

- Work
- Volunteer
- Family / Community
- Interests and Activities

Training / Education

- College
- University
- Volunteer-based learning opportunities
- Courses, conferences, workshops, seminars

What is a skill? An ability to do something well

Where do we get them? We are either born with or develop skills. They are developed through work, training, and leisure activities.

What skills do you need? This usually depends on the type of job. The skills required can be specific, and can change depending on the environment. We need some skills from of all three main types to perform most jobs.

The three main categories of skills are:

1. Technical / Knowledge Skills
2. Personal Skills
3. Transferable Skills

1. Technical / Knowledge Skills

- Technical knowledge needed for a job
- Comes from employment, formal education, and training
- Most jobs require some technical skills

Examples: accounting, languages, public relations, word processing, computer programming, telemarketing, drafting, graphic design, construction, specific trades, designing products or systems, fund-raising, operating equipment, researching.

2. Personal Skills

Are often described by employers as the “chemistry” or “fit” they require. Sometimes these are the most important things an employer is looking for.

- Associated with our attitudes, personal characteristics, work habits
- Make you who you are
- Are often the words friends would use to describe you
- How we *approach* work
- Gained from all areas of life – not just work

Examples: Enthusiasm, flexibility, tactfulness, punctuality, maturity, self-confidence, determination, humour, honesty, assertiveness, reliability, loyalty, optimistic, ethical, initiative, risk taking.

3. Transferable Skills

- Things we can take from one job to another
- Developed through on the job experience mainly

Examples: Take a telephone message, name computer files and store them in an appropriate directory, presentation skills.

Assessing Your Strengths Exercise

Think back over the past five years and list your three most satisfying accomplishments.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Next, list the corresponding skills or abilities that enabled you to succeed in these (i.e., election as class president -- leadership skills, selection as editor of the school newspaper - writing skills)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

These are “selling” points for prospective employers, and this process helps you to identify some of your skills.

Skills Assessment

Read through the following list of skills and circle each one that you have performed in the past in any area/setting of your life. Then rate yourself in those you've circles with either as either "1" for strong ability or "2" for some ability.

Teamwork

- Working to ensure that a team's purpose and objectives are clear
- Leading or supporting when appropriate
- Managing and resolve conflict when appropriate
- Recognizing and respect diversity within a team
- Respecting other team members
- Understanding the role of conflict in a group
- Working within the dynamics of a group

Communication

- Writing clearly and concisely
- Speaking so that others understand
- Reading and understanding written information
- Providing feedback
- Persuading
- Perceiving nonverbal messages
- Listening attentively
- Facilitating group discussion
- Expressing ideas clearly
- Editing / proofreading for written errors
- Asking questions
- Presenting to an audience

Project Planning

- Working to agreed quality standards
- Selecting and use appropriate tools/technology for a task or project
- Planning a project with well-defined objectives
- Monitoring the success of a project
- Adapting to changing requirements and information

Research

- Analyzing data
- Citing sources accurately
- Gathering information
- Identifying resources

Financial Management

- Auditing financial reports
- Budgeting expenses
- Calculating numerical data
- Collecting money
- Making estimates
- Verifying calculations
- Recording data using appropriate tools
- Raising funds

Organization

- Coordinating items or tasks
- Developing or coordinating schedules for others
- handling detail work
- Handling details
- Maintaining a calendar for yourself or others
- prioritizing work
- Reviewing detailed information for accuracy

Management & Leadership

- Coaching others
- Delegating responsibility
- Enforcing policies
- Initiating new ideas
- Making decisions
- Managing conflict
- Managing groups
- Motivating others
- Promoting change
- Supervising employees
- Negotiating
- Training
- Providing discipline when appropriate

Problem-solving

- Analysing situations or information
- Mediating between people
- Defining a problem
- Using logic
- Finding solutions
- Evaluate, assess, or test possible solutions
- Research or investigate
- Resolving conflicts
- Handling complaints

Interpersonal

- Cooperating
- Being punctual
- Managing time
- Meeting goals
- Enlisting help
- Accepting responsibility
- Setting and meeting deadlines
- Being accountable for actions

Technical/Computer-based

- Fill in your own expertise/programs here

Compile your top five skills from the assessments you just completed, and prioritize them with #1 being your top skill. Consider the discussions and assessments so far – you will probably see some repetition over these areas. These are your top five skills to offer employers.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Below, for each of your top five skills, provide a concrete example of a time you used it, in the form of an accomplishment or result if possible. Also provide measurements and numbers where possible. If you can think of more than one result for each skill, list all of them. If you find it very difficult to come up with a result or example, you may want to re-visit your list of skills and select another for your top five. For example:

Skill: Speaking and presenting to groups

Result(s): Developed and delivered a presentation about leadership skills and presented it to a group of 30 as part of a course at the Nova Scotia Community College

Skill: Selling

Result(s): Won award as top sales person for the YMCA fundraiser, selling 65 tickets, an increase of 30% over the previous year

1. Skill: _____

Result(s): _____

2. Skill: _____

Result(s): _____

3. Skill: _____

Result(s): _____

4. Skill: _____

Result(s): _____

5. Skill: _____

Result(s): _____

Sample Skills Inventory from a Business Administration Student

Skills Inventory

Leadership and Management Skills

- Held the position of head server at The River Inn Pub in Galway, Ireland, and managed a staff of seven servers.
- Helped manage and run the volunteer bar tent at the Atlantic Jazz Festival, which served an average of 200 people per night.
- Held the position of head server at the Steak and Stein Family Restaurant, and managed an average of ten servers per shift.

Public speaking Skills

- Co-wrote and presented a ten-minute presentation on contrast and halo effects for the first year Organisational Behaviour course at the Nova Scotia Community College.
- Represented L'Ecole du Grand Havre in an oral presentation competition with a five-minute presentation on the inequality of wages still existing in today's society, and placed second.
- Wrote and presented a five-minute presentation on Abbey Road Studios for the first year Communications course at the Nova Scotia Community College.

Customer Service Skills

- Received a positive comment card from a customer when working as a check-in agent for Air Canada for going above and beyond job expectations.
- Received the employee of the year award at Steak and Stein Family Restaurant for outstanding customer service.
- Regularly received positive comment cards when working at Steak and Stein Family Restaurant, regarding excellent customer service and attention to detail.

Included with permission from Andrea Perrault

Planning: Where you are heading

“Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it you will land among the stars.” – Les Brown

Ideal Job Exercise

You are going to write the advertisement for your ideal job.

1. Think about the job you would love to have in about three to five years after graduating from the business program
2. Try to be realistic in your expectations
3. Fill in some of the criteria below to help you develop this job description for your ideal job

My Ideal Job

Job title:

Skills you would use:

Daily Activities:

Setting or Location:

Qualifications: (skills, experience, or education required)

Type of Organization: (corporate, government or not-for profit; you can provide a specific name, if you know it)

Hours of work:

Salary:

Any other relevant information:

What Is Important to You?

To help determine what you consider important for your career, rank the following items from 1 (most important) to 15 (least important).

- Being in a situation that lets me set my own hours.
- Being able to have a beneficial impact on others' lives.
- Being paid well.
- Being responsible for and directing the work of others.
- Doing work in a highly competitive or demanding environment.
- Doing work that puts demands on my imagination or creative skills.
- Enjoying the job environment and the people.
- Have an opportunity to do many different things and not doing boring work.
- Having a job that gives me a great deal of status and respect.
- Having a steady job with job stability/security
- Having an opportunity for promotion/advancement
- Work that offers intellectual stimulation and allows me to show my best abilities.
- Working at a job that is compatible with my personal values and convictions.
- Working in close contact with other people.
- Working in limited contact with others.

Career Goals

You should not expect to automatically know what you want to do or should do for the rest of your working life. Many people are still not sure what exactly they want to do “when they grow up” even at the age of forty or fifty, and some people never know for sure. You should attempt to capture some ideas of where you’d like to be in the future, knowing that career goals do change over time as you learn and grow.

Here are a few ideas and tips for developing career goals.

- ♦ Keep them career-related and don’t make them so personal that you wouldn’t show a potential employer
- ♦ Think about and capture your personal goals while you develop your career goals, although you may not want to include them in your portfolio
- ♦ Use results-oriented language in your goals, for example, you should not say what you hope to do, but what you will do
- ♦ Consider your skills, abilities, career research, and values in setting your goals
- ♦ Make your goals **SMART** - **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**imely (see the article on the next page)
- ♦ Remember, there is no one right answer for career goals, as they are as unique as each one of us
- ♦ For additional info, see the article online at <http://www.career-intelligence.com/management/SmartGoals.asp>

Examples

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | positive language | |
| In 2009, I will be | working as a | marketing coordinator in the Nova |
| when / deadline | specific job / position | |
| Scotia Government, | making a salary of at least | \$30,000 per year. |
| specific employer | | measurable number |
- By May 2008, I will have an entry-level accounting position with a hospital in the Metro Halifax area

Now, list your career goals for one, five and ten years. Think about what you want to be doing in ten years and what you want to have achieved. Take into account what is important to you, your skills and abilities, and your career research.

First, set your long-term goal – what do you want to be doing in five to ten years? Then, think about the steps required to reach that goal. These become medium (two to five year) and short-term (six month to two year) goals. Your goals should follow the SMART approach.

My Long-term Goal: _____

My Medium-term Goal: _____

My Short-term Goal: _____

Websites for Job Searching

Here are some websites that provide information on career options, career quizzes, and job advertisements.

<http://careeroptions.ednet.ns.ca>

<http://jobs.gc.ca>

<http://www.canadajobs.com>

<http://www.careerbeacon.com>

<http://www.careercruising.com> (username nsc, password Halifax)

<http://www.careeredge.org>

<http://www.guffeyessentials4e.nelson.com> (see Careers and Job Search section)

<http://www.jobbank.gc.ca>

<http://www.jobfutures.ca>

<http://www.jobsetc.ca>

<http://www.labourmarketinformation.ca>

<http://www.monster.ca>

<http://www.theworkplace.ca>

<http://www.workopolis.com>

* Don't forget to check out the websites of professional associations

Packaging: How to market yourself

"I find that the harder I work, the more luck I seem to have." –Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)

Resumes

You should always have an up-to-date resume, and now is the time to get started. Often the resume is the first impression the employer gets of you. It should advertise your strengths and accomplishments in ways that clearly show the future benefits you will provide to employers.

As a marketing tool, your resume should ideally be individually designed to convince a potential employer that you are an ideal candidate for his/her organization. You should customize your resume for each job you apply for.

What is a resume?

It is a written summary of your work skills, accomplishments, education and experience prepared to introduce you to an employer

What is the purpose of a resume?

The purpose of the resume is to whet the appetite of a prospective employer and to obtain an interview. Think about who will be reading it and what they will be looking for. Many employers receive hundreds of resumes daily and rarely spend more than a minute or two reviewing each (frequently only 20 - 45 seconds). Employers initially review resumes to eliminate them.

They should be specific to the job you are applying for, and should be tailored to each and every job. You may want to develop a few versions, specific to your career areas.

The **KISS** principle applies -- Keep It Short & Stimulating.

There are three main resume formats:

1. Chronological
2. Functional / Skills-based
3. Combination

1. Chronological Resume

- Most common format used
- Organized by time sequence
- Actually use “reverse” chronological order – most recent first
- Emphasizes job titles, employment history, and steady employment record
- Exposes spotty work history or gaps in employment
- If employment experiences have been similar, it can seem repetitive
- Should use this format if your most recent work experience directly relates to the position you are applying for

2. Functional or Skills-based Resume

- Organized according to skill
- Skill headings can be emphasized for the job you are applying for
- Emphasizes skills and abilities in order of importance, rather than by date
- Allows you to downplay areas you don't want to emphasize or gaps in work history

- Recommended if direct experience is limited, changing career direction, or work history is irregular

3. Combination

- Includes best aspects of both chronological and functional
- Gives skills as well as dates and positions for employment history

Resumes usually include these key sections...

- Contact info
Name, address, telephone number, email address
- Work experience (unless it is a functional or skills resume)
Position, employer, dates, accomplishments / activities in point form
- Education / Training
All Programs or courses with institutions/organizations and dates
- References
Upon request – Keep an updated page of 3-4 references to provide on request and bring to interviews

Other headings that could also be included...

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ▪ Career objective | ▪ Volunteer experience |
| ▪ Summary of qualifications or skills | ▪ Licenses and accreditations |
| ▪ Career or professional experience | ▪ Computer Knowledge |
| ▪ Other experience | ▪ Publications |
| ▪ Professional affiliations | ▪ Knowledge of foreign languages |
| ▪ Special accomplishments | ▪ Interests |
| ▪ Scholarships or awards | ▪ Portfolio available upon request |

Never include...

- Age or date of birth
- Social Insurance number
- Health
- Physical descriptors
- Religion
- Sex / gender
- Salary expectations
- “Resume” as a heading
- References – have them on a separate page to provide on request

Resume Dos & Don'ts

Do...

- Be honest
- Keep it within two pages
- Use action words to start sentences
- Use minimum number of words – eliminate any words that are unnecessary
- Use past tense for past jobs and present tense for current work
- Use point form and short statements
- Leave white space, good sized margins, make it easy to read
- Print it onto high quality paper (white or a light colour)
- Tailor it to the specific job
- Focus on accomplishments and results, not duties
- Use numbers to describe accomplishments and results, i.e. reduced employee turnover from 50% to 15%
- Put contact info and name on both pages
- Have someone else review it for you
- Proofread it – three times and backwards

Don't...

- Be too modest
- Use abbreviations
- Use “I”
- Use complete sentences to describe work experience (you should use point form instead)
- Use “etc.”
- Use the words “responsible for” or “duties included” if at all possible
- Develop something you can't send electronically, i.e. as an email attachment

Resume Checklist

	Content	Yes/No
1	Name is larger than the font size used in the body of the resume and bolded	
2	Includes contact information (name, address, phone number(s), appropriate email address)	
3	Name, phone number, and page 2 are on both pages (smaller font in upper corner) in case pages get separated	
4	If included, the objective briefly and very specifically states the position being applied for	
5	Skills are highlighted either through a skills summary with effective demonstration statements OR effective demonstration statements describing experiences	
6	Work Experience (if included) is described with bulleted demonstration statements beginning with an action word	
7	Each work experience (if included) includes job title, employer, location (city and province) and dates of employment	
8	Self-evident work experience, i.e. waitress, retail sales clerk, is not described in detail but achievements or transferable skills are listed instead	
9	Education section includes degrees / diplomas listed first in bold followed by the institution name, location, and year graduated (or dates attended)	
10	Volunteer experience (if included) includes a title, name of organization, location (city and province) and dates along with bulleted statements (if applicable)	
11	Experience(s) and education are listed in reverse chronological order (most recent first)	
12	Interests/Activities (if included) are brief and listed in point form or summarized on one line	
13	Last line stating References and Portfolio available upon request is included	
14	Overall, the resume highlights accomplishments and benefits to the employer and is targeted to the specific position	
	Writing	
15	No spelling or grammar mistakes	
16	Written in the third person - no "I" statements	
17	Action words used to begin each bullet point	
18	No unnecessary phrases like "duties included" or "responsible for"	
19	Abbreviations and acronyms eliminated, except when well known like provinces	
	Overall Appearance / Style	
20	No more than two pages	
21	Lots of "white space" and easy to read	
22	Printed on good quality, light coloured paper	
23	Consistent heading, font and sizing throughout	
24	Font size is easy to read (10 – 12 point) and heading are larger	
25	Bullets and formatting not overdone (no more than two types of bullets per resume)	
26	Spacing between and within sections is consistent	

Poor example of a resume to practice with the checklist

Amy B. Carter
1234 Oriole Trail
Long Beach, IN
46360
(219)-123-4567

Experience

Dec. '98 - Present Manpower Temporary Services Naperville, IL

I was responsible for industrial sales for GE and to analyze monthly, weekly, and, daily sales reports. I was also responsible for scheduling training classes, seminars, and conferences.

June '98 - Dec. '98 Minnesota Life Insurance Barrington, IL

Administrative Secretary

I was responsible for research and design of sales and training presentations and for scheduling.

SBC Warburg Dillon Reed Chicago, IL

Facilities Assistant

I was responsible for balancing the facilities budget and scheduling maintenance calls, staff meetings, office relocation's, and construction projects.

May '96 - May '97 KSMR Radio 92.5/94.3FM

General Manager

My duties included managing staff and the management team, with duties that include disciplinary actions, budgeting, special requests, program scheduling, and hiring. I also balanced a budget, as well as chairing a committee to receive a grant for increasing station amenities such as wattage, equipment, space, and music library.

Education

1993 - 1997 St. Mary's University of Minnesota Winona, MN

- B.A., Public Relations
- Major in Mass Media

Diploma in Marketing, Minnesota College

Volunteer Work

Coach, Minnesota Elementary Girl's Basketball team

Fundraiser, Heard and Stroke Foundation

Student Association, St. Mary's University

Member, IABC International

Interests

Ballet Dancing, Cooking, Reading, Coaching Soccer

Zachary Dawson

235 Summit Drive * Truro, NS B1V 9P5 * 902-849-6444 * zach@hotmail.com

OBJECTIVE

To work in a challenging office administration position that offers professional development and the opportunity to use my education and skills in office information technology.

SKILLS SUMMARY

Office-Related Skills

- Obtained two years related office experience
- Experience operating a switchboard and proper telephone etiquette at Christmas Daddies
- Knowledge of filing alphabetically and numerically
- Experience in faxing and photocopying
- Ability to perform accounting functions
- Training in proper grammar and punctuation through courses at Nova Scotia Community College

Computer Skills

- Experienced using Excel, Microsoft Word 2000 to generate typed letters and memos, Database Input, Access, WordPerfect, Internet researching, Electronic mail, and Simply Accounting
- Ability to type 30 words per minute
- Developed PowerPoint presentations for courses at Nova Scotia Community College

Teamwork/ Leadership Skills

- Ability to work with others in a positive, productive manner as demonstrated in group project at the Nova Scotia Community College
- Effective use of time management skills by meeting deadlines
- Knowledge of the importance of protecting confidential information
- Cooperate with others by listening to their views and respecting their opinions

Customer Service Skills

- Received retail and customer service experience over the past two years by working on a part-time basis while attending college
- Assist customers with providing answers to their questions as a retail clerk at Home Depot
- Attending to the customers needs as required
- Communicated politely and respectfully towards the public in the customer service role at Home Depot
- Knowledge of in-store policies and ability of in-store communications
- Experience with inventory control
- Participated in a Super Host seminar that provided effective customer service awareness
- Experienced with handling cash

EDUCATION

2004	Nova Scotia Community College, Halifax, NS Office Information Technology Certificate
2003	Mackenzie High School, Truro, NS Grade 12 Diploma

CERTIFICATION

- Super Host Certificate
- Telephony Skills Seminar Certificate
- WHIMS & OHS Certificate

WORK EXPERIENCE

May 2004	Christmas Daddies, Halifax, NS (Work Term)
2003 – Present	Cashier and Customer Service, Home Depot, Bayer's Lake, Halifax, NS

REFERENCES AND PORTFOLIO AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Jeff D. Johnson

50 Concord Avenue
Halifax, NS B3T 5W4
Tel: (902) 423 1782
E-mail: jjohnson@hotmail.com

Objective

To obtain an entry-level accounting position in the Metro Halifax area

Summary of Skills

Accounting Skills

- Extensive experience balancing the books for different organizations
- Comfortable with organizational procedures
- Familiar with current accounting standards

Communication Skills

- Effectively able to assist clients with questions and concerns
- Researched and wrote a report on the accounting profession
- Efficiently able to answer telephone and direct messages

Computer Skills

- Comfortable with using the Internet, email as well as word processing software
- Experience with spread sheet packages
- Knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, and Outlook

Education

Nova Scotia Community College, Dartmouth, NS 2003-2005

- Business Administration Program (currently attending)
- Accounting Concentration
- Completed WHIMIS & OHS certification

Halifax West High School 2002

- Grade 12 Graduate Diploma

References: Available upon request

Ima Keener

200 Main Street
Halifax, NS, B3K 4V6
902-445-5555
imakeener@hotmail.com

Education

- 2002 Advanced Diploma in Public Relations Diploma**
Nova Scotia Community College, Halifax, NS
- 1998 Grade 12 Academic Diploma**
Halifax West High School, Halifax, NS

Public Relations Experience

Communications Coordinator

May 2002

Province of Nova Scotia (Work Term)
Halifax, NS

- Wrote and edited content for newsletter, and worked with designer on production
- Assisted in planning and implementation of news conferences
- Researched and wrote three articles for website
- Developed familiarity with provincial government processes

Assistant Communications Officer

January - April 2002

Maritime Insurance Company
Halifax, NS

- Wrote and edited content for newsletter, liaised with designer and distributed monthly publication
- Developed media kit for annual general meeting: PSAs, profile, news release and fact sheets
- Assisted in collaborative communications with professional associations

Other Work Experience

2000 – 2002	Hostess, Sam's Restaurant, Halifax, NS
1999 – 2000	Sandwich Artist, Subway Restaurant, Bedford, NS

Professional Development

- International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), Student Member, Maritime Chapter
- Chaired the Finance Committee for the Portfolio Reception at the Nova Scotia Community College
- Created public relations agency and 'pitched' for business as part of a college course
- Writing Workshop, IABC, June 2002
- Wrote an article for the campus newspaper on the Student Association elections
- Organized fund-raising committee and coordinated canvassers and recruiters for YMCA Halifax

Portfolio & References Available Upon Request

Cover Letters

A cover letter is sent with a resume as the first introduction to an employer and an introduction to your resume. It explains why you are sending your resume. It should be brief and to the point, and one page is sufficient. You want to catch the interest of the reader and then move them on quickly to your resume. A cover letter must be personalized - directed to a particular person with their title.

Benefits of a cover letter:

- Gives employers a quick summary of your abilities match their needs
- Highlights unique and specific information that may not be in the resume
- Makes a positive first impression

A cover letter is a marketing tool, and it should concentrate on what the buyer will be receiving rather than what you, the seller, will receive. Rather than saying "I am seeking a challenging position" say "You will be getting an innovative, experienced marketer."

Opening Paragraph - states who you are and why you are writing. It is important that you lead with your strongest point or contact:

The opening can mention:

- The position you are applying for (and reference number if given)
- Where you saw the ad or how you heard about it (if someone referred you)
- Your interest in the position
- That your resume is enclosed

As a recent high school graduate, I am seeking summer employment in accounting.

Having reviewed the position description for a Personal Care Worker in your hospital, I believe my skills and experience will allow me to make an immediate contribution to your team.

Middle Paragraph(s) - tells what you have to offer. This is also the place for you to highlight the particular aspects of your background that would be of interest to this company. Refer the reader to your resume but do not repeat the detailed information from the resume. Remember the letter should be concise; this paragraph should not exceed 4 or 5 sentences.

Here you can include:

- General summary of your qualifications
- How you match the specific job requirements listed in the ad

Closing Paragraph - lets the reader know what action you will be taking or what you expect. Also thank them for their time and consideration here. You should include:

- Your interest in meeting for an interview
- Arrange for further contact or your follow up call
- Your phone number to make it easy for them to contact you

The opportunity to meet with you and discuss my qualifications would be appreciated. I may be reached at 555-0000 and look forward to receiving your call.

Thank you for taking the time to review my resume. I will phone you in a week to follow up.

A few tips for your cover letters:

1. Do not repeat your resume; just highlight the main points
2. Make sure it addressed to someone, and call to get a name if you don't have one
3. Double check the spelling of all names and make sure titles are correct. Don't know if it is Mr. or Ms? Call and check. Use Ms., never Mrs. or Miss.
4. Check your spelling and grammar and ask someone else to review it for you before you send it.
5. The letter paper should match the paper of your resume if at all possible
6. Limit the use of **I, me, and mine**. If every sentence begins with one of these words, rewrite the sentences.
7. Don't use words in your letter such as could, maybe, prefer, or might - change them to strong words like will, can, and know. For example: Given my experience, "I **know** that I **can** contribute to your organization" carries much more power than "Given my experience, I **feel** that I **might** contribute"
8. Try to answer the question that the employer is going to asking themselves – why should I hire this person?
9. Include your return address at the top of the letter and the date.

Follow Up - After you have sent your cover letter, the next step is to make the follow up phone call. Since they have already received the letter, the follow-up phone call is easy. "Mr. Smith, my name is Tom Jones and last week I sent you a letter and resume. Did you receive it?"

Portfolio Learning

What is Portfolio Learning?

Portfolio learning is a self-directed, student-centered process, through which you have the opportunity to talk about yourself, what you are doing in your particular program(s) at NSCC and where you want to go in life. Each portfolio experience is as unique as you are; no two are the same!

Although the portfolio experience varies from student to student, at the most basic level, the process is rather simple: after some initial discussions with a faculty or staff advisor (i.e., it could be your classroom or shop teacher; it could be a member of Student Services or Library staff; and it could be a faculty member who teaches you Communications, Computer Fundamentals, etc.), you begin to collect "stuff" about yourself. The actual items that you include in your portfolio very much depend upon you and your career plans. After all, it is your portfolio! However, since NSCC is a learning institution and this is a learning experience you will need to include at least the following "stuff":

1. A clear statement of your career goals
2. A resume
3. A list of your skills, especially those related to your program and your career goals (e.g., "I communicate well with people", "I take responsibility for my own actions").
4. Clear evidence of what you have learned and what you are good at (i.e., your competence level).
5. Appropriate work samples that illustrate what you have learned, your skills and competence.
6. Most importantly, your portfolio should contain a reflective piece - some narrative (written or otherwise) that demonstrates your understanding of yourself, your program, your experience at NSCC and your life goals.

Taken from: http://www.nsc.ca/Admissions/Portfolio/Portfolio_Learning.asp

FAQs on Portfolio Development

Portfolio learning is a self-directed, student-centered process, through which you have the opportunity to talk about yourself, what you are doing in your particular program(s) at NSCC and where you want to go in life. Each portfolio experience is as unique as you are; no two are the same!

Following are some commonly asked questions and answers.

What are the most important features of a portfolio?

The most important features about portfolio learning are:

- You! This is about the presentation of your self in everyday life - as simple and as awesome as that!
- It is a process! Yes, you may produce an individual binder or a CD, a video or some other medium. But in portfolio learning the focus is on the experience - it is on what is happening to you.
- It never ends! For academic reasons, we will have to decide whether or not you complete your portfolio in time for your graduation. However, portfolio learning never ends - it changes as you change throughout your life. It is what life-long learning is all about!
- Although it is your portfolio, you cannot live it alone! The Community College is fortunate to have a wonderful pool of people resources, especially portfolio practitioners - they have been there and are there! More importantly, they are there to help you, to give advice and to help you reflect. On every campus, there are many such people - check them out!

What is the purpose of a portfolio?

Most students build a portfolio to prepare them for work and to market themselves to potential employers. Portfolios may also be used for career planning or as a means of challenging for a college or university course credit.

Who is responsible for the portfolio?

You are ultimately responsible for your portfolio. You decide what will be included. The role of faculty and staff is to advise and to facilitate the portfolio learning process.

Are there specific items you should include?

You decide what your portfolio contains, but most students include the following "stuff":

- Statement of career goals
- Resume
- Work samples
- Skills inventory
- Evidence of knowledge and abilities
- Reflective piece, like a learning narrative

Who assesses a portfolio?

You do. You make sure it represents you and your learning and that you are satisfied that it tells people who you are and what you have accomplished.

We do. A number of people are involved in assessing your portfolio. Teachers and others as determined by your campus make up the assessment team.

Is my portfolio graded?

You do not receive a grade for your portfolio. A faculty/staff team will determine whether your portfolio is “acceptable” or “unacceptable” based on these questions:

- Is your portfolio thorough?
- Does it show evidence of reflective learning?
- Is it relevant to your field or study or career choice?
- Is the material appropriate?

Generally speaking a portfolio should address three personal questions:

- Where am I?
- Where do I want to be?
- How do I get there?

What are the guidelines for deciding what goes into the portfolio?

Each artifact should relate to the purpose for which your portfolio is being used. Strong components will answer the following in a positive way.

- Does the item demonstrate and/or document the assets you want to put forward?
- Is the item clearly and strongly related to the purpose the portfolio is built for?
- Does the item give the individual 'value add on', (make you a stronger candidate)?
- Does the item strengthen the portfolio?

Does the portfolio change?

Constantly. To reflect life long learning, as new skills are learned, or present skills furthered developed, more learning (formal and informal) would be added. And of course the items in a portfolio are changed and/or rearranged according to the specific purpose for which the portfolio is being used. Like a resume, a portfolio should be tailored to individual use.

What are the benefits of developing or using a portfolio?

1. *It gives you the edge in the marketplace.*

We live in an extremely competitive world with many highly qualified people competing for the same jobs. Employers are searching for the best candidates. A diploma or a degree is not enough, certainly not proof that a person has the right stuff. A portfolio provides proof of your skills and abilities, while the experience enables you to present yourself in a positive, self-confident manner.

2. *It is a terrific road to self-development.*

People who have developed portfolios often speak about the advantage of self-development. As you build and organize samples of your work, articulate your aspirations and career goals, identify your skills and abilities and reflect upon your self-worth, you can use the portfolio to re-examine yourself, track your skills, recognize your strengths and weaknesses and identify what you need to do as you progress in life.

3. *Portfolio builds self-confidence*

The process of looking at yourself - your abilities and skills, your competencies and personal traits, your goals and dreams - builds self-confidence. It highlights personal worth and reveals many personal attributes that you were unaware of.

4. *Identify your learning gaps*

The portfolio process often leads students to identify not only their strengths, but also gaps in their learning from which they can generate future goals. Needless to say, this process of revising and changing will continue throughout your life. It's another form of life-long learning.

5. *Real Learning*

Think about how you learn! You learn formally in the classroom, lab or shop. You learn informally through groups, clubs and organizations. You learn incidentally in your meetings with people, even at a party, sports event or just chilling out with someone - learning takes place all the time. However, in our colleges, universities and schools, we have concentrated solely on and given credit to one form of learning - formal, where you are tested for what you know about a subject. Portfolio learning expands the experience, takes into account everything that is happening to you and gives you credit for it.

Where can I get more information on portfolio development at NSCC?

- Online at <http://www.nsc.ca/Admissions/Portfolio/>
- The Student Portfolio Guide, which is an interactive CD with great information on portfolios that is available in all NSCC libraries or on the computer network at <s:/SchoolofBusiness/CondeaKrewenki/>
- NSCC libraries also have additional resources and samples
- Your instructors will be able to answer any questions on portfolio

Source: NSCC Portfolio Guide

Planning Your Portfolio

To help get you thinking about your portfolio, answer each of these questions in the space provided.

1. What are some of the skills or capabilities you would like your portfolio to highlight for potential employers?

2. What things would you like to have or to show in your portfolio that you don't already have?

3. What items do you think an employer in your career area would expect to see in a portfolio?

4. What ideas do you have at this point for an organizational framework for your portfolio? For example the sections you will divide your portfolio into (based on skills perhaps), a colour scheme, or a theme.

5. List as many items you can think of that could be included in your portfolio. These should be specifically your own, and remember you can include employment, education, and volunteer work samples.

6. What are two or three places or sources for more information on portfolio development that you could access?

Tips for Developing your Portfolio

1. The process of developing a portfolio is as important as the final product; pay attention to insights and understanding throughout the development process.
2. Focus on quality: include five outstanding items rather than ten mediocre ones
3. Target your work samples and documentation to the job you are applying for or your target industry
4. Apply a framework with a few key sections focused on your best skills
5. Consider applying a theme or consistent style or colour to tie it together
6. If you don't have something you should include in your portfolio, get it or make it
7. Bigger isn't always better – think about quality versus quantity
8. Think outside the “binder” and stand out from the crowd by making your portfolio creative and memorable
9. Make sure your portfolio really reflects who you are and your best qualities – it's all about you!
10. Continue to update and improve your portfolio continually

Portfolio Checklist

Your portfolio should be a personal reflection of you, and it is up to you to decide what should go in it to best reflect who you are and what you are good. This checklist is designed to help you gather and organize items for your first draft portfolio. This is not a list of what you have to do or have to include in your portfolio, and your answers to the items in the list do not have to be yes. These are suggestions to help you get started.

Draft Portfolio	Yes	No	Comments/ Suggestions
Organization & Style			
Is it organized into a few (3-5) key sections that focus on the best skills/abilities you have to offer?			
Is there a consistent look or style, such as a theme or colour coordination?			
Is the style or theme appropriate for the career you are going into? For example not too flowery or not showing any creativity at all?			
Is it easy to find items to show contents, like you would in an interview, for example?			
Does it highlight what is unique about you?			
Is it distinctive and memorable?			
Does it truly reflect who you are?			
Does it reflect who you are, where you are going, and how you'll get there?			
Is it professional-looking, well-organized and easy to follow?			
Contents – Suggestions Only (these are not <u>all</u> required)			
Resume			
Skills inventory			
Career Goals			
Personal mission statement or philosophy			
Statement of originality or confidentiality			
Reflective piece (i.e. learning narrative) that demonstrates your understanding of yourself, your program, or your experiences			
Cover page with your name			
Table of contents (does not have to be detailed)			
Work Values			
Inspirational quotes that show what you believe			
Reference list with three or four people who could comment on your abilities (work, volunteer or academic), along with their contact information			
Work samples that illustrate what you have learned, skills and competence.			
Documentation in the form of evidence of what you have learned and what you are good at, such as letters, transcripts, certificates, or other documents			
Are all contents of the highest quality possible and free from spelling or grammatical errors?			
Have you edited out anything that is not your best work? Remember to focus on quality, not quantity because bigger isn't better.			
Overall, do the contents of your portfolio provide back-up or proof of what you have claimed you can or have done in your resume?			
Are the contents tailored as much as possible for the specific opportunity or purpose you are using it for right now?			

Presenting: How to show what you can do

“Decide that you want it more than you are afraid of it.” – Bill Cosby

Interview Skills

An interview is a two-way exchange of information.

- The employer wants to know if you're a good fit for his or her company
- You want to know if the company is right for you

The Day Before the Interview

Facing an interview can rattle even the most confident people. Here are some things to do the day before the interview so you'll be prepared and will get there on time.

Clothing. Choose and prepare your interview outfit. Make sure everything you plan to wear is clean and pressed so there won't be any surprises just before you head out the door.

Give yourself time. Take an hour before the interview to get ready and be on your way. If the interview is first thing in the morning, set your alarm and make sure it works.

Documents. Make sure you have all the papers you need such as: business cards, extra copies of your resume, list of references, and a portfolio or samples of your work (if appropriate).

Interview info. Put the interview information in a place where you won't lose it. Include: name of the interviewer, address of the interview location, directions to get there, and phone number of the organization.

Rehearsal. Review your resume, the job advertisement, what you know about the organization, and your prepared answers. If you have a chance, do a practice interview with a family member or friend.

Mental Preparation. Try to pre-think your interview, picture it as positively as possible, and make some commitments to yourself.

- I will be confident because I'm well prepared.
- I will fully participate by being enthusiastic and interested.
- I will be a good listener and pay attention to what the interviewer says.
- I will demonstrate my knowledge of the organization and the industry.
- If I don't know something, I will say so without being embarrassed.
- I will believe in myself.

Interview Dos and Don'ts

Do...

- ✓ Prepare
- ✓ Relax and smile.
- ✓ Be on time
- ✓ Look directly at the interviewer and make eye contact.
- ✓ Have a firm handshake
- ✓ Elaborate briefly on your experience, your skills, and background.
- ✓ Have some knowledge about the organization
- ✓ Be sincere. Sell yourself without bragging.
- ✓ Be natural and let your sense of humour show.
- ✓ Think before you answer. It is quite acceptable to pause before responding in order to organize your thoughts.
- ✓ Be honest. If you don't know something, acknowledge it.
- ✓ Be a good listener, but if you are asked a question you don't understand, ask for clarification.
- ✓ Be calm and aware of your nervous habits, and try to keep them under control.
- ✓ Shut the door on your troubles and try to avoid discussions about family or financial problems; instead, think about what you can do for the employer.
- ✓ Leave as soon as the interview is over.
- ✓ Thank the interviewer for having the opportunity to talk with him/her.
- ✓ Be polite to everyone – the receptionist may be reporting back on your behaviour. A good word from this source may help.
- ✓ Send a thank you note to the interviewer

Don't...

- ⊗ Exaggerate or compare yourself to others.
- ⊗ Cross your arms across your chest. This gesture will make you seem defensive.
- ⊗ Give just "yes" and "no" answers. One-liners are conversation stoppers.
- ⊗ Use too much flattery. An interviewer will recognize flattery and consider you insincere.
- ⊗ Argue with the interviewer.
- ⊗ Criticize your old job or boss.
- ⊗ Discuss politics, religion, or controversial subjects.
- ⊗ Speak too loudly or too softly. Use the interviewer as your model--how are they speaking?
- ⊗ Ask about the salary or fringe benefits first.

Your Questions for the Interviewer

One of the final questions you'll be asked in an interview is: "Is there anything you would like to know about the organization or the job?"

Answering "No" sends the wrong message - that you're not really interested in the organization, don't know what's important to you in an employee/employer relationship, or lack confidence and assertiveness.

Here are some questions you could be prepared to ask.

- About the job
 - What is the size of the department/branch/section?
 - Do you have a training program? Could you please describe it?
 - What are my opportunities for advancement?
 - What is the salary range for this position?

- About the person you would be working for
 - Who would I report to directly?
 - How long has he/she been with the company?
 - What is their background?

- About the company
 - What is the management philosophy?
 - What are the company's goals and how will they affect employees?
 - Does the company have plans for expansion or reduction?

Common Interview Questions

Practice your answer for each of these commonly asked questions.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What do you want to do with your life?
3. Do you have any work experience?
4. How would you describe your ideal job?
5. Why did you choose this career?
6. When did you decide on this career?
7. What goals do you have in your career?
8. How do you evaluate success?
9. Describe a situation in which you were successful.
10. What do you think it takes to be successful in this career?
11. What accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction in your life?
12. If you had to live your life over again, what would you change?
13. Would you rather work with information or with people?
14. Are you a team player?
15. What motivates you?
16. Why should I hire you?
17. Are you a goal-oriented person?
18. What are your short-term goals?
19. What is your long-range objective?
20. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
21. Where do you want to be ten years from now?
22. Do you handle conflict well?
23. Have you ever had a conflict with a boss or professor? How did you resolve it?
24. What major problem have you had to deal with recently?
25. What is your greatest strength?
26. What is your greatest weakness?
27. If I were to ask one of your professors to describe you, what would he or she say?
28. Why did you choose to attend your college?
29. What changes would you make at your college?
30. How has your education prepared you for your career?
31. What were your favorite classes? Why?
32. Do you enjoy doing independent research?
33. Who were your favorite professors? Why?
34. Do you have any plans for further education?
35. What qualities do you feel a successful manager should have?
36. What do you know about our company?
37. Why are you interested in our company?
38. Are you willing to travel? How much?
39. How much money do you need to make to be happy?
40. What kind of salary are you looking for?

Tips for using your portfolio

1. Open it and put it on the table in front of you during the interview, not on the floor
2. Present it - don't read it
3. Use the portfolio to respond to specific interview questions; avoid the page-by-page approach
4. Don't leave your portfolio with an interviewer
5. Never force the portfolio on someone
6. Have some extra copies of materials – don't give away originals
7. Include the following phrase on your resume so interviewers know you have a portfolio:
References and Portfolio available upon request
8. Anticipate questions employers might ask about your portfolio
9. Practice answering interview questions with your portfolio
10. Be proud of your portfolio and present it with confidence!

Sources

Career Intelligence, www.career-intelligence.com

Conference Board of Canada, www.conferenceboard.ca/education

Creating your career portfolio at a glance guide for students. Anna Graf Williams, Karen J. Hall. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, c2005.

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Purdue University, http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/p_skillinv.html

Student Portfolio Guide, Nova Scotia Community College, 2005

University of Western Australia, http://www.csd.uwa.edu.au/job/guide/ex_3.htm
