

# How to Write a Résumé



## ***Rule of Thumb for Résumé Showcasing***

Pick up your résumé. Where are your thumbs? They are probably at about the midpoint of the page. Most employers spend 15 – 30 seconds when first examining a résumé, and only seeing the top half of your résumé. Therefore, everything above your thumbs should be the most important information that you want to convey to the employer, and everything below your thumbs should support the message you are communicating.

In this short amount of time employers determine your strengths and if you have something to offer. If they feel that you do, they will look at your resume in more depth. If not, you will be filed away. You need to make sure that the employer knows what you are capable of doing. If you don't tell them, no one else will. Employers want to **QUICKLY screen you out**. Your goal is to get screened **IN**.

How do you fashion your résumé so that it gets noticed? The employer doesn't have time to search your résumé for pertinent information – you must provide it on a silver platter – easy to obtain and elegantly presented.

Take the time to craft a résumé that is an accurate reflection of you. Don't do it alone! Tap into book and web resources, and ask others for input. Remember that you have the final say on your résumé's appearance – you must **like** it. When you look at it, you should say, "Wow, I'm good!!"

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### ***What is a Résumé?***

#### **IT IS NOT**

- ❖ Your Autobiography
- ❖ Your Complete Obituary

#### **IT IS**

- ❖ A Document Starting Your Professional Credentials

#### **ITS PURPOSE IS**

- ❖ Not to Obtain a job
- ❖ To Obtain an Interview (**YOU** get the job)

#### **Your Résumé Is Your Advertisement**

In most instances your résumé is your first contact with an employer. Make sure that it gives a positive, professional impression. Your résumé is your advertising tool and should provide:

- ❖ **A sense of purpose** - Why are you sending the résumé?
- ❖ **Focus on achievements** - What separates you from everyone else?
- ❖ **Accuracy** - Was it 2003 or 2004? Find out!!
- ❖ **Clarity and Simplicity** - This is not the time to try to use the word *antidisestablishmentarianism* in a document.
- ❖ **An attractive package** - No jelly or coffee stains, please.
- ❖ **Salesmanship** - What measurable facts can you provide?
- ❖ **A sense of person behind the resume** - This flat piece of paper needs to sing and dance so the employer will want to meet you in person.
- ❖ **Credibility** - More than 80% of résumés contain some stretch of the truth. Don't do this. If you lose your professionalism, it will be nearly impossible to get it back.

## *Why Do I Need a Résumé?*

Employers are contacted by many applicants and have little time to thoroughly screen each applicant. Employers want to know exactly how you can be useful to them without having to read through excessive or unrelated details.

A one page résumé is ideal for those with little experience: **two pages maximum** for anyone.

A résumé should provide a positive impact by being clear, accurate, and relevant to the job objective and focused on one industry or employer.

- ❖ **YOU** are the best person to write your résumé.
- ❖ In most cases your résumé is your first contact with an employer.
- ❖ Your résumé is a communication tool. Effective communication requires you to be responsible for conveying a clear message. If your reader doesn't get the information, you didn't communicate successfully.
- ❖ Your résumé summarizes who you are and what you can do.
- ❖ Your résumé helps the employer decide whether or not to interview you.
- ❖ Your résumé focuses on the employer's needs, not yours.
- ❖ Carry résumés with you when you are canvassing companies for job openings.
- ❖ Submit them with your application materials.
- ❖ When you send a résumé by mail or email, always include a cover letter to identify the job for which you are applying, and why the employer should hire you.
- ❖ Keep copies of your résumé in your car and have it available at a moment's notice.
- ❖ Invest in resume paper and matching envelopes – appearance is everything!

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## *Choosing your Résumé style*

The **resume style** you choose for your job resume is determined by the goal you have for your career. If you are seeking a job in your field and have experience, use a **chronological resume**. This resume starts with your most recent job and works backward. Conversely, if you are seeking a new type of work, you may want to consider the **functional/combination resume**. This style groups your skills together and includes a short chronological work history at the end.

### *Chronological Resume Style*

The chronological resume is the most common style used by job seekers. The point of the chronological resume is to showcase a progression of increasing responsibility. This style works well for those who have worked for "impressive" employers as well as those with several years of experience.

The chronological resume is the most familiar to employers. Some employers have stated their preference for this style of resume.

There are disadvantages to writing a chronological resume if you have gaps in your employment. This style also puts too much emphasis on jobs that you may want to minimize and does not allow you to target your resume to the jobs you are seeking.

### ***Functional Resume Style***

The functional resume style is common as well and is often used by job candidates who've held internship positions. The point of the functional resume style is to focus on the work experience you have had that gives you experience and a background for the job you now seek.

With this functional resume style you only include work experience, internships and volunteer activities that are pertinent to the position you now seek. You don't need to list them in chronological order - and in fact generally won't.

What's important is that you first list the job that displays the most relevance and expertise for the job you now seek. If the employer or firm for which you were interned or volunteered for is an impressive noteworthy name, then start with company name big and bold. If that is not the case, then start with your job title. Whichever you choose this is the pattern and resume style you should know follow throughout this resume.

### ***Combination Resume Style***

The combination resume style can be used by almost anyone. This style of resume combines both the chronological resume and the functional resume formats.

The combination resume offers more flexibility than a chronological resume and includes the dates that employers say they want. A disadvantage to this style is that it may make your resume too long.

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## ***Tips when writing a Résumé***

- ❖ Highlight important information (your name, address, and titles of jobs, major categories) with **boldface** type. If you will be moving soon, use the two-address format.
- ❖ Be clear and concise.
- ❖ **Use bullet points** with short sentences rather than lengthy paragraphs.
- ❖ Use **action words** when describing what you have done. Examples include: created, managed, developed, revised, presented, etc.
- ❖ Use **%s, \$s and #s**. Percentages, dollar totals, and numbers stand out in the body of a resume.
- ❖ **Highlight your strengths**, and what is most relevant to the potential employer.
- ❖ Put the **strong and most relevant points first** where they are more apt to be read.
- ❖ **Match the needs of the hiring company**. It sounds obvious, but its worth mentioning that using a custom resume instead of a generic one will greatly increase your chances of an interview, as you will be a better match in the eyes of the reader.
- ❖ **Keep it neat**. The font should be Courier, Arial, or Times New Roman 10 or 12 point. The length of your resume should be 1-2 pages.
- ❖ Get an **outside opinion** on your resume before sending it off. You should always have a 3<sup>rd</sup> party review your resume.
- ❖ **Proof. Proof. Proof**. One mistake generally means you're out the door. The quality of your résumé reflects the quality of your work and professionalism. If you make a mistake on your résumé, will you make a mistake in your job? Employers will think so.
- ❖ **Save it!** You don't want to have to start from scratch every time.

# ***Chronological Résumé Format***

## **FIRST AND LAST NAME**

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City, State Zip Code

(555) 555-5555

Email address

(Be sure your email address is appropriate for business use)

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS**

- List the most relevant information pertaining to the position that you are applying to. This is the easiest way to tailor your resume to each specific position.
- You can simply copy and paste your strongest, relevant bullet points from your work experience to this area to draw the employer in.

## **WORK EXPERIENCE**

***Job Title***

**Employer**

- List all of your responsibilities, accomplishments, and skills

**Dates**

City, State

***Job Title***

**Employer**

- List all of your responsibilities, accomplishments, and skills

**Dates**

City, State

***Job Title***

**Employer**

- List all of your responsibilities, accomplishments, and skills

**Dates**

City, State

## **VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

Volunteer can be just as important, if not more, than your work experience, so be sure to include all volunteer experience!

***Volunteer Job Title***

**Organization you volunteered for**

- List all of your responsibilities, accomplishments, and skills

**Dates**

City, State

## **LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS:**

- List any licenses and certifications relevant to the position you are applying for. Include dates.

## **ADDITIONAL SKILLS**

- List any skills that are relevant to the position you are applying for such as computer programs, typing skills, or languages spoken. List any clubs, organizations, associations, or groups you have been or are a part of. List any other volunteer activities or relative trainings.

## **EDUCATION**

***Educational Institution***

**Degree or Major**

*\*If you have completed education above the high school level, do not put your high school information on your resume.*

**Dates**

City, State

# ***Functional Résumé***

## **FIRST AND LAST NAME**

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City, State Zip Code

(555) 555-5555

Email address

(Be sure your email address is appropriate for business use)

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS**

- List the most relevant information pertaining to the position that you are applying to. This is the easiest way to tailor your resume to each specific position.
- You can simply copy and paste your strongest, relevant bullet points from your work experience to this area to draw the employer in.

## **EXPERIENCE**

### **Type of Experience (Management, clerical, retail, sales, customer service, factory, hospital, volunteer, etc.)**

- Description
- Description

### **Type of Experience**

- Description
- Description

### **Type of Experience**

- Description
- Description

## **LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS:**

- List any licenses and certifications relevant to the position you are applying for. Include dates.

## **ADDITIONAL SKILLS**

- List any skills that are relevant to the position you are applying for such as computer programs, typing skills, or languages spoken. List any clubs, organizations, associations, or groups you have been or are a part of. List any other volunteer activities or relative trainings.

## **EDUCATION**

***Educational Institution***

**Degree or Major**

*\*If you have completed education above the high school level, do not put your high school information on your resume.*

**Dates**

**City, State**

# ***Combination Résumé***

## **First and Last Name**

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City, State Zip Code

(555) 555-5555

Email address

(Be sure your email address is appropriate for business use)

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS**

- List the most relevant information pertaining to the position that you are applying to. This is the easiest way to tailor your resume to each specific position.
- You can simply copy and paste your strongest, relevant bullet points from your work experience to this area to draw the employer in.

## **EXPERIENCE**

**Type of Experience (Management, clerical, retail, sales, customer service, factory, hospital, volunteer, etc.)**

- Description
- Description

**Type of Experience**

- Description
- Description

**Type of Experience**

- Description
- Description

## **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

***Job Title***

Employer

City, State

Dates

***Job Title***

Employer

City, State

Dates

## **LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS:**

- List any licenses and certifications relevant to the position you are applying for. Include dates.

## **ADDITIONAL SKILLS**

- List any skills that are relevant to the position you are applying for such as computer programs, typing skills, or languages spoken. List any clubs, organizations, associations, or groups you have been or are a part of. List any other volunteer activities or relative trainings.

## **EDUCATION**

***Educational Institution***

**Degree or Major**

**Dates**

City, State

*\*If you have completed education above the high school level, do not put your high school information on your resume.*

## *Draft Resume*

### **Contact Information**

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Name

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Address

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Telephone Number

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Email Address

### **Qualifications**

How many years of experience do you have?

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What are your areas of expertise?

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List your professional attributes.

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### **Work Experience**

#### **Paid and Volunteer Positions**

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Company/Job Title

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Location

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Dates

Duties (Bullet Points):

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Company/Job Title



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Location

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Dates

Duties(Bullet Points):

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Company/Job Title

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Location

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Dates

Duties (Bullet Points)

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**Other Skills Summary (Bullet Points)**

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**Education**

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## ***Résumé Critique Checklist***

- Material fits neatly on one page, two pages if there is enough relevant experience.
- No spelling, grammar or punctuation errors. Typing is neat, clean and professional-looking.
- Name, address, telephone and e-mail are at the top and easy to locate.
- Margins at sides and bottom are not less than one-half inch.
- Layout and design are easy to read and pleasing to the eye.
- Important titles are emphasized by using text enhancements where appropriate (caps, bolds, underline, italics), but not overdone.
- Indentations or appropriate symbols are used to organize information logically.
- Overall appearance invites one to read it.
- Action words are used to communicate accomplishments and results.
- Extraneous personal information (height, weight, age, sex, etc.) has been omitted.
- If using a career objective, make sure it is specific, clear and targeted.
- Remember the RULE OF THUMB - the most important information is in the first half.
- Use conservative colors like white, off-white, beige or gray parchment.
- Avoid graphics and colorful paper unless you are in the design field.
- Always use reverse chronological order.
- Employment that is older than 15 years is not listed.
- Language specific only to the company in which you worked has been translated to apply to other areas (spell out acronyms).
- Strongest statements are at the top, working downward from them.
- Dates of employment and education are included and accurate.
- "References Available Upon Request" should not be on the resume. References are listed on a separate sheet of paper.
- Quantities, amounts and dollar values are used to enhance the description your job.
- Addresses and phone numbers of previous employers are omitted.
- Hobbies or social skills are not listed unless they are related to the job target.
- The word "I," "me," "my" is used only in the cover letter.
- If I am changing careers, my transferable skills are easily identifiable.
- I feel that my résumé represents me well.

## ***Resume Action Verbs***

### **A-B**

accelerated, acclimated, accompanied, accomplished, achieved, acquired, acted, activated, actuated, adapted, added, addressed, adhered, adjusted, administered, admitted, adopted, advanced, advertised, advised, advocated, aided, aired, affected, allocated, altered, amended, amplified, analyzed, answered, anticipated, appointed, appraised, approached, approved, arbitrated, arranged, ascertained, asked, assembled, assigned, assumed, assessed, assisted, attained, attracted, audited, augmented, authored, authorized, automated, awarded, avail, balanced, bargained, borrowed, bought, broadened, budgeted, built

### **C**

calculated, canvassed, capitalized, captured, carried, out, cast, cataloged, centralized, challenged, chaired, changed, channeled, charted, checked, chose, circulated, clarified, classified, cleared, closed, co-authored, cold, called, collaborated, collected, combined, commissioned, committed, communicated, compared, compiled, complied, completed, composed, computed, conceived, conceptualized, concluded, condensed, conducted, conferred, consolidated, constructed, consulted, contracted, contrasted, contributed, contrived, controlled, converted, convinced, coordinated, corrected, corresponded, counseled, counted, created, critiqued, cultivated

### **D**

debugged, decided, decentralized, decreased, deferred, defined, delegated, delivered, demonstrated, depreciated, described, designated, designed, determined, developed, devised, devoted, diagrammed, directed, disclosed, discounted, discovered, dispatched, displayed, dissembled, distinguished, distributed, diversified, divested, documented, doubled, drafted

### **E**

earned, eased, edited, effected, elected, eliminated, employed, enabled, encouraged, endorsed, enforced, engaged, engineered, enhanced, enlarged, enriched, entered, entertained, established, estimated, evaluated, examined, exceeded, exchanged, executed, exempted, exercised, expanded, expedited, explained, exposed, extended, extracted, extrapolated

### **F-H**

facilitated, familiarized, fashioned, fielded, figured, financed, fit, focused, forecasted, formalized, formed, formulated, fortified, found, founded, framed, fulfilled, functioned, furnished, gained, gathered, gauged, gave, generated, governed, graded, granted, greeted, grouped, guided, handled, headed, hired, hosted

### **I**

identified, illustrated, illuminated, implemented, improved, improvised, inaugurated, indoctrinated, increased, incurred, induced, influenced, informed, initiated, innovated, inquired, inspected, inspired, installed, instigated, instilled, instituted, instructed, insured, interfaced, interpreted, interviewed, introduced, invented, inventoried, invested, investigated, invited, involved, isolated, issued

### **J-M**

joined, judged, launched, lectured, led, lightened, liquidated, litigated, lobbied, localized, located, maintained, managed, mapped, marketed, maximized, measured, mediated,

merchandised, merged, met, minimized, modeled, moderated, modernized, modified, monitored, motivated, moved, multiplied

#### **N-O**

named, narrated, negotiated, noticed, nurtured, observed, obtained, offered, offset, opened, operated, orchestrated, ordered, organized, oriented, originated, overhauled, oversaw

#### **P**

paid, participated, passed, patterned, penalized, perceived, performed, permitted, persuaded, phased, out, pinpointed, pioneered, placed, planned, polled, prepared, presented, preserved, presided, prevented, priced, printed, prioritized, probed, processed, procured, produced, profiled, programmed, projected, promoted, prompted, proposed, proved, provided, publicized, published, purchased, pursued

#### **Q-R**

quantified, quoted, raised, ranked, rated, reacted, read, received, recommended, reconciled, recorded, recovered, recruited, rectified, redesigned, reduced, referred, refined, regained, regulated, rehabilitated, reinforced, reinstated, rejected, related, remedied, remodeled, renegotiated, reorganized, replaced, repaired, reported, represented, requested, researched, resolved, responded, restored, restructured, resulted, retained, retrieved, revamped, revealed, reversed, reviewed, revised, revitalized, rewarded, routed

#### **S**

safeguarded, salvaged, saved, scheduled, screened, secured, segmented, selected, sent, separated, served, serviced, settled, shaped, shortened, showed, shrank, signed, simplified, sold, solved, spearheaded, specified, speculated, spoke, spread, stabilized, staffed, staged, standardized, steered, stimulated, strategized, streamlined, strengthened, stressed, structured, studied, submitted, substantiated, substituted, suggested, summarized, superseded, supervised, supplied, supported, surpassed, surveyed, synchronized, synthesized, systematized

#### **T-W**

tabulated, tailored, targeted, taught, terminated, tested, testified, tightened, took, traced, traded, trained, transacted, transferred, transformed, translated, transported, traveled, treated, tripled, uncovered, undertook, unified, united, updated, upgraded, used, utilized, validated, valued, verified, viewed, visited, weighed, welcomed, widened, witnessed, won, worked, wrote

## ***References - Why Have Them?***

Why have them?

- People who are evaluating your candidacy may know them.
- They indicate the breadth of your experiences (professional, academic, personal, etc.)

Who Should Be Included?

- Current Practitioner - Someone who is doing what you're applying to do. Do you have what it takes to do the job? This person should be able to say an unqualified YES!
- Academics - Someone who can attest to your academic proficiency.
- Work - Someone who can speak to your qualities as an employee and worker.
- Personal - Someone who can speak about you as a person.

Who You Should NOT Include

- Relatives and/or parents
- Brothers and/or sisters
- People who don't know you
- "Big Name" people you don't know

Reference Page

- This is a **separate page** from your résumé and cover letter.
- This page should be included with any application material you submit.
- It should be done on the same paper as your résumé, and should have the same heading with your contact information at the top.
- You never know who knows someone else.

You Should Always

- Follow directions and supply the type of references the employer requests.
- **ASK** your references if they feel comfortable being your reference.
- Give your references copies of your resume as well as a description of the job you are applying for. They are doing you a favor- help them!
- Thank your references!

## *Sample Reference Page*

**John Doe**  
1111 Ivy Lane  
Milton, PA 17847  
(555) 555-5555  
[John.doe@email.com](mailto:John.doe@email.com)

### **References**

Dr. Sarah Smith  
Professor of Political Science  
Bucknell University  
Lewisburg, PA 17837  
(570) 577-0000  
[sarahsmith@email.com](mailto:sarahsmith@email.com)

Mr. Leon Johnson  
Attorney at Law  
Komisarow, Baach & Snouffer, P.C.  
1010 Anywhere Blvd.  
Milton, PA 17847  
(570) 742-0000  
[leonjohnson@email.com](mailto:leonjohnson@email.com)

Ms. Karen Danish  
President  
Karen Danish & Associates  
2000 Anytown Street  
New York, NY 10001  
(600) 348-1000  
[karendanish@email.com](mailto:karendanish@email.com)

## ***Cover Letters***

The purpose of a cover letter is to introduce you to an employer, give them a frame of reference, and provide a sample of your writing ability. Some employers focus on the cover letter, others focus on the résumé. Make sure that you invest time in developing both, and you will present yourself in a more professional light.

### *Cover Letter Template*

Your Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Phone Number

Date

Individual's Name  
Job Title  
Name of Organization  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:

**First Paragraph:** State the reason for writing. Name the specific position or type of work for which you're applying. Mention how you learned of the opening.

**Second Paragraph:** Explain why you're interested in working for this employer and specify how you're PERFECT for this position. Don't repeat the information on your resume. Include something special or unique about yourself that will benefit the employer. Remember, the reader will consider this an example of your writing skills.

**Third Paragraph:** Mention that your resume is enclosed and indicate your desire to meet with the employer. You may want to suggest alternate dates and times, or simply advise them of your flexibility to the time and place. Include day and evening contact information. Include a statement or question that will encourage the reader to respond. Be sure to communicate your plan to follow up. You might state that you'll be in the area on a certain date and would like to set up a meeting, or you'll call on a certain date to set up a meeting. Finally, thank the employer for his/her time.

Sincerely,

*(Your Signature in blue or black ink)*

Your typed name

## ***Cover Letter Checklist***

- The first paragraph gives the employer a frame of reference.
- No spelling, grammar or punctuation errors.
- Typing is neat, clean and professional-looking.
- Margins at sides and bottom are not less than one-half inch.
- Layout and design are easy to read and pleasing to the eye.
- Use simple language. Keep it short, sweet and to the point.
- The cover letter is typed, never hand written.
- Overall appearance invites one to read it.
- Action words are used to communicate accomplishments and results.
- No extraneous personal information (height, weight, age, sex, etc.).
- I've used the same paper for my cover letter and resume.
- If answering an ad, the cover letter is written specifically to the ad.
- I have individualized each cover letter.
- I have not included salary information.
- I have described myself in terms of the contributions I can make to the employer.
- The tone of my cover letter is proactive.



# ***Thank You Letters***

## **What is a Thank You Letter?**

### **Set Yourself Apart From 99.9% of Other Job Seekers**

This is one of the most important yet least used tools in a job search. Its purpose is to establish good will, express appreciation and/or to strengthen your candidacy. The basic rule of thumb is to send a letter to everyone who helps you in any way. When used after employment interviews, thank you letters should be sent within 24 hours of each contact. Also, be sure to send thank you letters to individuals who granted you information interviews, and to people who provided references for you.

### ***Thank you Letter Template***

Street Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Phone Number

Date

Individual's Name  
Job Title  
Name of Organization  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for the opportunity this morning to discuss the secretarial position. Our conversation gave me a better understanding of ABC Company and the requirements of the job. The additional information from Max and Katherine was helpful in gaining a better perspective of the position.

My strong office and interpersonal skills will definitely make a contribution to your company. I am proficient in all the computer software packages you use, and I feel I possess the customer service experience you want.

I enjoyed meeting the office staff and touring the facility. This is clearly a quality organization with an emphasis on efficiency and a dedication to teamwork. I would consider it a privilege to join your team and will contact you next week to inquire about the hiring decision.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*(Your Signature in blue or black ink)*

Your typed name