

The Summer Public Interest Job Search

Part One: Best Practices in
Drafting Cover Letters and
Resumes

January 25, 2012

The Summer Public Interest Job Search...

Welcome!



The Summer Public Interest Job Search...

Two-part Webinar Series:

- Today: Cover Letters & Resumés
- Wednesday, 2/1: Interviewing & Networking

The Summer Public Interest Job Search...

Presenters:

- Stuart Smith, New York City Law Department
- Nicole Vikan, Georgetown Univ. Law Center
- Steve Grumm, NALP

The Summer Public Interest Job Search...

Webinar Overview:

- Resumés – tips & best practices
- Cover Letters – tips & best practices
- Bonus Application Tips...

- Questions welcomed! Submit during; answers at end

The Summer Public Interest Job Search...

Topic One:

Resumés

Resumés: Tips & Best Practices...

...Tip One: Résumé Format

- Header
 - Name, Address, Email, Phone (permanent/temporary)
- Education (J.D. Expected...)
- Experience
 - Detailed descriptions, driven by action verbs
- Languages
- Honors (if not directly academic)
- Interests

Good Resumé

Jane Jones

21 East 23rd Street, ♦ St. Louis, Mo 80006 ♦ 678-123-4567 ♦ JJones@law.washu.edu

EDUCATION

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL

J.D. Candidate; GPA: 3.460

Honors:

Thurgood Marshall Scholar, Top 16%-35% of Class; Wash U. Merit Scholarship, Northland-1 Fellow (2009), Public Interest Grant Awardee (2009 & 2010); Selected for Publication in Federal Circuit Bar Journal

Activities:

Federal, Criminal, Appellate Clinic; FCBJ Articles Editor; Moot Court Board; Religious Freedom Moot Court Participant
Jacob Burns Community Legal Clinics Student Board; Equal Justice Foundation; Hispanic Law Student Association; LexisNexis Student Association; Kaplan PMBR Representative

St. Louis, MO

Expected, May 2011

ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Bachelor of Arts in English and International Relations: GPA 3.95
Minor in Economics; Law, Ethics, and Society Certificate

Miami, AL

May 2008

EXPERIENCE

MISSOURI FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Office of General Counsel Legal Intern

- Evaluate merits of labor law grievances submitted by MFGE Locals, research applicable Merit Systems Protection Board and Federal Labor Relations Authority decisions, and write memoranda
- Assist with brief writing and other preparation for union arbitrations

St. Louis, MO

August 2010 - Present

UNITED STATES EIGHTH CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS

STAFF ATTORNEY'S OFFICE: IMMIGRATION UNIT

Legal Intern

- Drafted bench memos for immigration-related appeals, such as denials of asylum and motions to reopen

Kansas City, MO

May - August 2010

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL

Legal Research Assistant – Professor Raven-Hansen

- Collected cases and edited drafts for civil procedure casebook

St. Louis, MO

February - May 2010

LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Legal Intern

- Assisted with trial preparation for cases before the D.C. Landlord-Tenant Court
- Assessed and filed reasonable accommodation claims and responded to document production answers

Clymer County, MO

Sept. – December 2009

CATHOLIC CHARITIES IMMIGRANT SERVICES

Legal Intern

- Interviewed low-income clients and prepared immigration forms for family visa petitions
- Assisted with trial preparation for Immigration Court hearings

Falls Church, VA

May – August 2009

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE

Early Representation Unit Intern

- Interviewed English and Spanish speaking clients to validate arresting officer's information

Miami, FL

June – August 2008

Not-so-good Resumé

Randy ("Skippy") Philiberty, Esq., CPA
911 Columbus Ave, Apt 13, New York, NY 10025
hotsexyskippy@yahoo.com

Education

University of Yale School of Law, New Haven, CT 2011-Present
J.D. candidate
GPA: 3.0 in Spring 2012 Semester

University of Princeton, Princeton, New Jersey

B.A., May 2008

GPA: 2.5

Major: Quantum Physics

LSAT Score: 135

Awards: Who's Who of Among American College Students

Activities: Phi Beta Theta (Social Chair) -- organized weekly social events attended by more than 1000 students from 15 local area colleges and high schools; "Students for Trotskyite Revolution" -- led mass demonstrations including non-peaceful disobedience directed at imperialistic institutions.

Tottenville High School, Staten Island, NY

Regents High Schol Diploma.

Awards: Prom King; Voted most popular in high school year book

SAT: 200 (Verbal), 800 (Math)

Activities: Tottenville Football (starting quarterback)

Experience

Law Offices of Thornton Philiberty, New York, NY

Junior Attorney

8/09-Present

Drafted constitution of small third world country. Advised our client, the number 2 internet search engine, how to evade taxes in an ethically questionable manner. Supported solo general law practice on corporate, probate and real estate transactions including preparing corporate formation and Operating Agreements, obtaining Private Letter Rulings on potential tax controversy. Drafted multi-million dollar real estate contracts for various New York millionaires.

Philiberty Estates & Golf Club, Long Island, NY

Vice President

6/08-8/09

Managed a team of seventy five ground staff and cleaners.

Interests

Spit-box music, workin out, brewing homemade beer, flying planes, checking facebok status, and watching Princeton football.

Resumés: Tips & Best Practices...

Tip 2

One Page?

Resumés: Tips & Best Practices...

Tip 3

~~“My Objective...”~~

Resumés: Tips & Best Practices...

Tip 4

Sparing Use of Italics

Resumés: Tips & Best Practices...

Tip 4 (cont'd.)

Italics Good for:

- Dates, Places
- Brief Descriptions
- Job Titles, etc.

Italics Not Good for:

- Lengthier Descriptive Passages

Resumés: Tips & Best Practices...

Tip 5...

Weaving In...

Resumés: Tips & Best Practices...

Tip 5 (cont'd.)

- Job Responsibility: “...interns will do outreach at migrant camps, interview and represent farmworker clients, and educate farmworkers about their rights.”
- Resumé:
 - Conducted rural outreach for 2010 U.S. Census...
 - Assisted in client interviews as a legal intern...
 - Tutored ESL students...
 - Taught a know-your-rights course to high-school students

Resumés: Tips & Best Practices...

Tip 6

Have Others Proofread!

The Summer Public Interest Job Search...

Topic Two:
Cover Letters

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

...Tip 1 (cont'd.)

Paragraph One

- Who You Are
- What You Want
- If Applicable, Mention Connection (referral)
- If Applicable, Mention Geographic Ties

Paragraph Two

- Why Interested in THIS Employer
- Why THIS EMPLOYER Should Hire YOU

Paragraph Three

- Conclusion

Good Cover Letter

ASHLEY M. BELZZUMPER

666 Death Row Rd., 13th Floor | Death Valley, AZ 07043
(555)123-5555 | ashley.blz@law.wvu.edu

January 15, 2012

Mr. Stuart D. Smith, Esq.
Office of Legal Recruitment
New York City Law Department
100 Church Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mr. Smith:

Please accept my application for an internship with New York City Law Department for the Fall 2012 semester. I am a second year law student at Washington University Law School whose interest in working for the Law Department grew after meeting with a member of the Law Department's recruitment staff regarding the Summer Honors Program.

My interest in the New York City Law Department stems from my strong desire to pursue a career in public service, particularly in tort law and litigation. I am highly drawn to your Tort Division because of its dedication to protecting New York City and its various important departments from liability. To prepare for work in this area, I sought out a judicial internship this year under New York State Supreme Court Civil Branch judge, Honorable Edward H. Lehner (*ret.*), where I was exposed to insurance litigation, personal liability and corporate liability disputes and trials.

I have gained knowledge about and an appreciation for public service, particularly in the area of tort law, which is why I would be excited about the opportunity to interview for an internship with the Law Department. An internship at the Law Department would mean being a part of a department whose various divisions are working for the same common goal, which is the protection and betterment of New York City.

Very truly yours,

Ashley M. Belzumbper

Not-so-good Cover Letter

Diana H. Lewis
555 East 55th Street #4F
New York, NY USA
10022

January 05, 2012

Dear NYC Law Department,

I've always believed what Ralph Waldo Emerson once said: "Law is the highest professional calling." I'm a hard-working, motivated 2L, who would be a great addition to your team. I'm seeking a summer associate position with your firm for 2012. I am most interested in your international law division. My uncle, Joe Blow, suggested that I would be a perfect match for your [organization]. I have the most unique work experiences and law school achievements that make me the most strongest candidate for Bronx DA's office.

Having just completed an internship with the New Jersey Office of the Public Defender where, among other responsibilities, I drafted motions, interviewed clients and engaged in intensive research and writing, I learned that exceptional legal representation requires unwavering dedication and a creative legal mind. My being selected from among the other summer interns to conduct research for the Bergen County Deputy Public Defender in connection with a first-degree sexual assault trial and invited to continue interning with the Public Defender's Office beyond the summer internship program are testaments to my dedication and work ethic.

I am confident that, if given the opportunity, I will apply these collective attributes to the fullest in order to make just as valuable a contribution to the New York State Attorney Generals office. My resume, references, transcript and writing samples are enclosed for your review, so please contact me.

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

Tip 2

One Page

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

Tip 3...

Greetings and Salutations...

- Yes: Dear Ms. Vikan:
- No: Dear Nicole Vikan:
- No: Dear Ms. Nicole Vikan:
- No: Nicole Vikan:
- No: Mrs. (unless self-identified)

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

...Tip 3 (cont'd.)...

If you don't have a contact name:

- Dear Sir or Madam:
- To Whom it May Concern:
- Dear Hiring Coordinator:
- Dear Hiring Committee Members:

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

...Tip 3 (cont'd.)...

Rule also applies to email notes.

Dear Mr. Grumm,

Attached please find my application materials for the 2012 NALP Fellowship. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely

Paul Westerberg

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

Tip 4...

The opening lines matter. Try to be:

- Clear
- Concise
- Conservative

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

..Tip 4 (cont'd.)...

- Do: I am a second-year student at [X] and am writing to apply for a summer clerkship. I am in law school solely to pursue a career in....
- Do: I am writing to apply for the [X] position at Public Defender Service. After working in your office last summer...

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

...Tip 4 (cont'd.)...

- Don't: When I was three years old I decided that I would become Attorney General...
- Don't: I am the best candidate for this position. Let me tell you why...

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

Tip 5...

A Complement
to the Resume

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

...Tip 5 (cont'd)...

- Highlight:
 - Concrete experiences
 - Credentials
 - Passions
- Weave in job-posting keywords

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

Tip 6

Cover Letter Drafting Tips...

- Be careful: Don't copy a sample
- Read job listing carefully & address key qualifications
- Draft letter in outline form
- Rewrite/adapt for each job posting

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

Tip 7

Have Others Proofread!

The Summer Public Interest Job Search...

Topic Three:

Bonus Application Tips

Bonus Application Tips

Tip 1

PDF 'em!

Bonus Application Tips

Tip 2

**Cover Letter Attached.
Short note in email body.***

*** Exception: total cold-call**

Bonus Application Tips

Tip 3

Font Style...

- **Sans Serif: Arial, Tahoma**
- **Serif: Bookman, Times New Roman, Garamond**
- **Yes: Business-like**
- **No: Fancy**

Bonus Application Tips

Tip 4

Avoid the “Symplicity Cold Shoulder”!

Bonus Application Tips

Symplicity Cold Shoulder:

Willard Romney has submitted a resume for you to review. This resume has been attached and is for the position of 2012–13 PSLawNet Fellowship at NALP.

The student entered the following notes:
[BLANK]

Bonus Application Tips

Tip 5

Always, always, always...
...follow directions.

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Tip 6

Additional Materials

- Writing Sample
- Unofficial Transcript
- References

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Tip 7

Follow Up!

The Summer Public Interest Job Search

Online Resource

www.pslawnet/jobsearchfundamentals

The Summer Public Interest Job Search

By week's end, this webinar recorded and stored at:

www.nalp.org/webinars

(Look under “Free Webinars”)

The Summer Public Interest Job Search

Questions?

(And maybe some answers...)

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Thanks!

