



CAREER DEVELOPMENT

How to Highlight your
Coniston Experience

A Walk through the
Job Hunting Process



CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE YOU APPLY

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Give your recommenders plenty of time to complete their letters, four to six weeks is a respectable amount of time. Provide a “power-packet” for all your recommenders, not only will it be extremely useful, it will make you look very on top of things. It should include:

- ▼ A list of all the programs or positions you are applying to and their due dates
- ▼ A copy of your transcript
- ▼ Addressed and stamped envelopes to all your programs (unless letters are to be submitted online)
- ▼ Your resume or CV, which details experience, accomplishments, extracurricular activities, and educational awards
- ▼ Any recommendation forms required by your program
- ▼ A list of attributes the business is looking for, what do you want the recommender to highlight



Be sure to send a nice **THANK YOU NOTE** after all your applications are in. Keep your recommenders updated on your job search.



Ask your **REFERENCES** in advance if they would be willing to serve in that capacity. This way you give them a heads up and they will be expecting a call and can prepare. If they are unable, you will be able to find an alternate.

AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW: Is a combination of a networking opportunity, an informational session, and a job interview. You want to target people in an aspirational role but who are not so high up that they will not have the time to meet with you. If you have a connection, they will be more likely to help out. Reaching out: start by asking for help, be clear and specific (include your expectations for meeting). The more personalized your ask feels, the greater chance of success you'll have. Be considerate- they are taking time out of their day to talk to you. Make sure you don't seem like you are asking for a job, even if that is true.

The screenshot shows an email interface with a blue header bar containing 'Message' and 'Options'. Below the header is a toolbar with icons for Send, Paste, and various text formatting options (font face: Verdana, size: 12, bold, italic, underline, text color: abc, background color, link color: A, and alignment options). The email content area shows the following fields:

From: [empty]
To: [empty]
Cc: [empty]
Bcc: [empty]
Subject: Coniston Alumni Seeks Your Advice

The body of the email reads:

Dear Sam,

I am a YMCA Camp Coniston staff member and John Tilley suggested I talk to you. May I have 20 minutes to ask you about your experience with IBM? I am exploring marketing careers in technology companies, and your insights would be very helpful. I know you may be busy, so I will try you again next week if we are unable to connect this week.

Thank you,
Peter

THE APPLICATION (AND ALL THAT IS INCLUDED):

COVER LETTER

Your cover letter should tell a different and complementary story to your resume. You want the reader to learn more about you, don't just repeat everything that is in your resume. Leave the reader with a clear takeaway message about who you are and what you've done. If you try to fit in too many examples, your important accomplishments and characteristics will be forgotten.

A strong personal statement will tell your future employer that you know what you are getting yourself into. You can think of it as a picture that provides a snapshot of who you are as a person or an indication of your priorities and judgment. They want to know that you are informed and are prepared to take on the job. Acknowledge your weaknesses and tell the reader how this position will help you improve if it is applicable. This shows that not only do you acknowledge your weaknesses, you are actively committed to improving them.

Current Address

Mr. or Ms.

Title

Organization

Street Address

City, State, Zip

FIRST PARAGRAPH: Get right to the point. Name the position, field, or general area you are applying for at the organization. Tell how you heard of the opening or organization. Name drop- if someone at the company suggested you apply. Include why you are interested in the position using specific information about the organization/position.

SECOND/THIRD PARAGRAPH: Illustrate how your qualifications match the ones the employer is seeking. Be specific and give examples. Mention one or two qualifications you think would be of greatest interest to the employer, ones that were not directly asked for, but that you believe would be beneficial and help you stand out among other candidates. Tell why you are particularly interested in this type of work. If you have had related experience or specialized training, point it out. Expand on the information stated in your resume (do not just repeat it).

FINAL PARAGRAPH: Close by making a specific request for an interview, if appropriate. You may suggest a specific date and time that you will phone to make an appointment. Make sure that your closing statement is positive and requests a specific action from the reader. Thank the reader for his/her consideration.

CLOSE YOUR LETTER:

Sincerely,

Your Signature and Typed Name

RESUMES

Each position has **MANY** different responsibilities. Your task is to tailor your resume to the exact job you are applying to (if you are applying to 10 different jobs, you should have 10 different resumes). Look at the job description, research the position and company, and schedule an informational interview if appropriate. Utilize this information to make yourself appear as informed and qualified as possible.

- ▼ Remove any camp jargon- it only confuses future employers and makes them more likely to discount your experiences
- ▼ Start each line with an action verb
- ▼ Use active voice
- ▼ A comprehensive resume should tell your story. It should not have every detail but rather give the reader a good picture of who you are. Focus on specific accomplishments- it should include a list of results and should not read like a job description

- ▼ Use a strong and informational beginning
 - Hiring managers will look at your resume for 6–25 seconds before moving on if they do not see anything notable
 - A professional summary can be used to front-load your resume with keywords to spike the readers interests and highlight your qualifications
- ▼ Leave space within the text. Don't cram everything in there—if it is too long, no one will read it
 - Add a line break between jobs and a small space between bullets
- ▼ Shouldn't be more than one page—do not try to include every detail or every experience. It should be a sample.

EXAMPLE RESUMES CAN BE FOUND ON THE NEXT PAGES:

These are example bullets, you should select four to five bullets that are the most appropriate for the position to which you are applying.

CABIN COUNSELOR

June 2014– August 2018 (*Seasonal Position*)

YMCA Camp Coniston – Croydon, NH

- ▼ Supervise and manage 64 participants for nine weeks, around the clock
- ▼ Facilitate conflict resolution and manage activities to resolve disputes
- ▼ Maintain an upbeat demeanor throughout a twelve hour work day
- ▼ Manage participants from an array of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds to create a single community built on respect and inclusion
- ▼ Critically evaluate emergency situations and act within established protocols
- ▼ Implement lesson plans to instruct 640 participants over the course of the summer
- ▼ Receive critical evaluation and take corrective action
- ▼ Establish and monitor each camp member's safety and security by fostering an environment of welfare
- ▼ Represent organizational culture through superior customer service interactions with parents; maintain a high level of competence, professionalism and act as a face of the organization
- ▼ Certified and trained in First Aid, Lifeguarding and CPR by the American Red Cross
- ▼ Give regular verbal feedback and written performance evaluations

- ▼ Communicate regularly with managers and executive leadership, includes reporting when needed
- ▼ Identify and respond appropriately to behavioral issues, alert management to ensure high quality communication with parents and medical providers
- ▼ Teach and provide appropriate emotional and critical incident response to emergency situations; including drills around active shooters, medical emergencies, drowning victims and missing individuals
- ▼ Collaborate with peers and supervisors to ensure effective and efficient organization functioning
- ▼ Mentor and supervise peers, including the individualized education and training of a first-year staff member
- ▼ Prioritize and efficiently manage multiple requests through the implementation of time-management skills in high-demand settings
- ▼ Extensive training in child abuse prevention and awareness, the stages of child development, behavior modification, and customer relations
- ▼ Solicit daily feedback from participants and take corrective action
- ▼ Step up and volunteer for additional positions and programs as needed
- ▼ Perform an evaluation of each participant to better serve and place them in the future
- ▼ Adhere to a schedule and ensure the successful completion by each participant
- ▼ Utilize theories of child development in the daily care of each participant

DIVISION LEADER

June 2014– August 2018 (*Seasonal Position*)

YMCA Camp Coniston – Croydon, NH

- ▼ Perform all duties of a Cabin Counselor
- ▼ Actively support and supervise 30 staff and 120 participants, ages 13-15
- ▼ Create, coordinate and supervise one large-scale event per week for the summer season
- ▼ Communicate regularly with management regarding any camper or staff problem
- ▼ Meet weekly with management to provide updates and ensure clear communication
- ▼ Lead training sessions for 100 staff members in industry standards, emergency procedures, and general camp protocols
- ▼ Moderate meetings with staff members to award distinguished behavior of campers
- ▼ Work effectively, collaborate and communicate with seven mid-level managerial peers
- ▼ Act as a contact, maintain and set an appropriate emotional response during an emergency procedure

PROGRAM AREA DIRECTOR

June 2014– August 2018 (Seasonal Position)

YMCA Camp Coniston – Croydon, NH

- ▼ Develop and execute age—and skill—appropriate lesson plans
- ▼ Maintain a safe and clean area; including the safe storage of all equipment and implementation of rules
- ▼ Give regular verbal feedback and written performance evaluations
- ▼ Develop activities to engage campers during unstructured times during the program
- ▼ Successfully completed the National Archery Association Basic Instructor Level One class

TILLEY'S TOP SIX BULLETS!

Receive critical evaluation and take corrective action

Represent organizational culture through superior customer service interactions with parents; maintain a high level of competence, professionalism and act as a face of the organization

Facilitate conflict resolution and manage activities to resolve disputes

Supervise and evaluate staff of ten

Critically evaluate emergency situations and act within established protocols

Maintain an upbeat demeanor through a twelve hour work day

JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND RESUME BULLET EXAMPLES

Taken from Alumni Job Descriptions

JOB DESCRIPTION LANGUAGE	RESUME BULLE
Assist in the planning and execution of various gift planning internal and external meetings including estate planning and cultivation events	Create, coordinate and supervise one large-scale event per week for the summer season
Respond to calls and emails from donors, prospects, and inquiries at large: Determine the urgency of the situation. Suggest appropriate response and inform supervisor when the situation merits his/her attention	Represent organizational culture through superior customer service interactions with parents; maintain a high level of competence, professionalism and act as a face of the organization
Work closely with other team members to help them with relevant tasks, show them how to learn new skills, and help resolve emerging problems on different projects.	Mentor and supervise peers, including the individualized education and training of a first-year staff member Facilitate conflict resolution and manage activities to resolve disputes
Communicate clearly and effectively while contributing as a productive member of both the geospatial analysis team and the Institute as a whole.	Meet weekly with management to provide updates and ensure clear communication Communicate regularly with managers and executive leadership, includes reporting when needed
Become adept with multitasking across projects, as well as understanding timeliness and prioritizing tasks Ability to independently manage simultaneous projects in an organized manner	Prioritize and efficiently manage multiple requests through the implementation of time-management skills in high-demand settings

USE AT LEAST FIVE OF THESE KEYWORDS AND PHRASES IN YOUR RESUME:

A professional summary at the top of your resume is a good way to increase your keyword density. It can help if you do not have much experience and need something to beef up your resume. Keywords are strengthened when they are presented with context; include your accomplishments to exemplify further your expertise within the competency. If you do not currently have some of the skills they desire, you can add an “Areas of Interest” on the bottom of your resume.

- ▼ Collaboration
- ▼ Effective decision making
- ▼ Problem solving
- ▼ Communication skills
- ▼ Ability to influence others
- ▼ Manage competing priorities
- ▼ Leadership ability
- ▼ Organizational awareness
- ▼ Attention to detail
- ▼ Conflict resolution

In the examples below, the words in italics are power words, while the ones in bold are the keywords. The ‘*what*’ emphasized by the power words improve the strength of your resume.

- ▼ *Created* a **training program** for **first-year staff**
- ▼ *Coordinated* **product launch campaigns** and **outreach events**
- ▼ *Developed* a budgeting software using **JavaScript** and **HTML**

CONGRATS! YOU GOT AN INTERVIEW! NOW WHAT?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR THE INTERVIEW PROCESS:

- ▼ What do you see as the most important skill you got from your camp experience?
- ▼ If you had a million dollars what charity would you give it to and why?
- ▼ What do you like in a manager? What characteristics do you value in a supervisor?
- ▼ Tell me about a project or accomplishment that you consider to be the most significant in your career.
- ▼ Suggestions on how their strengths will help to benefit the company?

- ▼ I'd like you to provide a brief overview of your background as it relates to this job. What have you done that is similar?
- ▼ What are you looking for in a new job?
 - Why is this important to you?
 - What would you need to know to determine if this position meets your criteria?
- ▼ Tell me about your education. Why did you select your school? Your major? What did you like most? Least? Do your grades accurately represent your capabilities?
- ▼ When I call your manager for a reference, what will he or she say about your dependability, work habits, and ability to work with others?
- ▼ Let's review one or two examples of your volunteer work. What did you do? Why did you get involved? What did you discover about yourself?
- ▼ What does being inclusive mean to you? Describe a situation when you were intentional about being inclusive?
- ▼ What does it mean to be "socially responsible"? In what ways do you express your personal social responsibility?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AN INTERVIEWER:

- ▼ How will I be trained?
- ▼ How will my performance be reviewed?
- ▼ What are the most immediate projects that need to be addressed?
- ▼ What are the skills and experiences you're looking for in an ideal candidate?
- ▼ What is the last person who held this job moving on to?
- ▼ Where have successful employees previously in this position progressed to?
- ▼ Where do you see this company in the next few years?
- ▼ Are there opportunities for advancement or professional development?
- ▼ Why does this role matter to the growth of the company?
- ▼ What do you like most about working here?
- ▼ What are the opportunities facing the company/department right now?
- ▼ What are the biggest challenges facing the company/department?
- ▼ What are your top three priorities for me this year, how will those be measured and how do they relate to the company's plans for this year?

ACCORDING TO FORBES...

THE 10 SKILLS EMPLOYERS MOST WANT IN NEW TO THE WORK FORCE EMPLOYEES

1

Ability to work in a team

2

Ability to make decisions and solve problems

3

Ability to plan, organize and prioritize work

4

Ability to communicate verbally with people inside and outside an organization

5

Ability to obtain and process information

6

Ability to analyze quantitative data

7

Technical knowledge related to the job

8

Proficiency with computer software programs

9

Ability to create and/or edit written reports

10

Ability to sell and influence others

THANK YOU LETTERS

AFTER AN INTERVIEW:

It is an opportunity to highlight your strengths while demonstrating a continued interest in the position. A thank you note will look very different if it is for someone who wrote you a letter of recommendation, served as a reference, or took the time to sit down for an informational interview. They can be more personal, perhaps give an update on your job search or some other anecdote. A thank you note after an interview should be:

- ▼ **BRIEF:** keep it to a few paragraphs
- ▼ **TIMELY:** write it within 24 hours after the interview
- ▼ **POLITE:** thank the interviewer for his or her time
- ▼ **POSITIVE:** highlight and re-emphasize your skills/abilities relevant to the position
- ▼ **INFORMATIVE:** include any brief post interview information that would be helpful

Your Name

Address, phone number and email

Date

Name, address of person to whom you are addressing the letter

Dear Mr./Ms. _____:

PARAGRAPH ONE: A one sentence thank you and quick reminder of where/ when the interview took place. Use the actual date in lieu of 'yesterday' and mention the positive aspects of your conversation.

PARAGRAPH TWO: Show understanding of the employer's situation, needs of the organization, and the position. Reiterate what you have to offer the organization. Quick summary of your skills/abilities that are relevant to the position.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Reaffirm interest in the position. Include that you would be willing to supply any additional information needed. Thank them and let them know you are looking forward to hearing from them soon.

CLOSE YOUR LETTER: Sincerely, sign your name and type your name.

TOP TRAITS INDICATED IN OUR RESEARCH

- ▼ Ability to influence others
- ▼ Ability to work both independently and in a team
- ▼ Able to manage competing priorities
- ▼ Adaptability- can adapt to industry shifts and keep the company current
- ▼ Attention to detail
- ▼ Can stick to a budget
- ▼ Communication skills- increases productivity
- ▼ Competence
- ▼ Conflict resolution- indicator of maturity and leadership potential
- ▼ Courage (willingness to take risks and accept challenges)
- ▼ Critical observation- a new perspective, intuitive solutions, new ideas
- ▼ Effective decision making and problem solving
- ▼ Enthusiastic
- ▼ Integrity
- ▼ Intelligence
- ▼ Leadership ability
- ▼ Learning agility
- ▼ Organizational awareness = emotional intelligence and interpersonal awareness
- ▼ Personable
- ▼ Responsive to constructive criticism
- ▼ Self-awareness
- ▼ Self-starter
- ▼ Strong work ethic

REMINDERS THAT CAN MAKE OR BREAK YOUR SEARCH:

- ▼ In all communications, use full sentences and capitalize words as you would in a formal writing assignment. This shows professionalism and care for what you are doing.
- ▼ Send thank you notes.
- ▼ Be on time.
- ▼ Always come with a couple questions for your interviewer in case some of them get answered.
- ▼ Have a basic understanding of the position and company.
- ▼ Proof-read everything. Better yet, have someone else do it too. Consistent verb usage, spelling, and grammar are very important!



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