Writing a winning application…
Daniel Lawton
University Relations
Nortel

What we are going to go through…
> Background information
> Branding
> Competencies
> Curriculum Vitae (CVs)
> Cover Letters/Cover Emails
> Application Forms
> Q & A

GET YOURSELF NOTICED
Watch out for the hints & tips!!

Recruiting the right person
It is very important to find a good match:
> For the employer:
  • A new hire is linked to a project need, with its challenges, milestones and customer expectations
  • Training is expensive (time and $$)
  • New comers are part of the dynamic of each team
  • New comers bring fresh opinions, new ideas, creative views
> For the candidate
  We spend a third of our life at work. It is therefore important to:
  • Get good job satisfaction
  • Add value
  • Have some fun!
  It's a 2 way process, and both parties have got choices to make

Preparation for the job search
> Give yourself enough time to prepare for your job search, treat it like another course
> Keep in mind that a thorough job search is a lot of work, put the time and effort into doing it right
> Study the market so you know where to apply
> Prepare a mini project plan and stick to it
> Know ahead of time when Career Fairs are taking place and be ready
> Don’t let the market frustrate you- the market reality is that there are ups and downs. You don’t know until you try

Branding Yourself
> In preparing for your job search think about the following:
  • What are your values, your characteristics?
  • Ask people close to you what they think of when they think about you?
  • What differentiates you from others who have the same skills and the same experience?
  • Realize there are many opportunities to brand yourself (classes, teams, student groups etc)
> Creating Your Branding, Differentiating Yourself:
  1. Decide what your brand will be?
  2. Your Actions should define/ develop your brand
  3. Branding involves staying visible, involved
**Searching for the Ideal Company and the Ideal Role**

- Look at industries that are of interest to you?
- Search the internet for companies that make the products or services that are of interest
- Look at recent news articles, journals to see who is growing, what industries are the ones to watch etc.
- Be flexible in your search, remember in some cases you won’t know if you like something unless you try
- Don’t wait for them to come to you
- Talk to individuals who work in that field and find out- is it truly like you think?

**Searching Sources: Telecoms**

Sites for information and investigation:
- Computer Weekly (IT Industry) [www.computerweekly.co.uk](http://www.computerweekly.co.uk)
- Financial Times (company reports) [http://www.ft.com/](http://www.ft.com/)
- Cellular News (Mobile) [www.cellularnews.com](http://www.cellularnews.com)
- Total Telecom (General Telecom) [www.totaltele.com](http://www.totaltele.com)
- “Linked In” (International Networking site) [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)
- Telecoms portal (variety of Telco info) [www.telecomportal.com](http://www.telecomportal.com)

Publications:
- Target Publications e.g. Target IT & Target engineering
- Specialist Graduate recruitment sites:
  - Your Careers service website/notice board
  - [www.doctorjob.co.uk](http://www.doctorjob.co.uk)
  - [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)
  - [www.hobsons.co.uk](http://www.hobsons.co.uk)
  - [www.milkround.com](http://www.milkround.com)

What are Recruiters & Hiring managers looking for?

What are employers looking for?

**Competencies**

- Focus: The Person
- Summary: “Behaviours observed in effective people” e.g. Interpersonal Effectiveness
- Indicators: Behavioural Statements e.g. Adapts style of interaction to take into account the feeling of others

- Competence

- Focus: The job/role
- Summary: “Related tasks in the job/role” e.g. Deals with enquiries
- Indicators: Outputs from the job/task e.g. Accurately completes enquiry form

Some Competency Areas

- Teamwork
- Technical Ability
- Analysis
- Planning & Organising
- Commercial Awareness
- Customer Awareness
- Influencing
- Relationship Building
- Leadership
- Initiative

What is a recruiter looking for? (Part 1)

- Think about who is looking at the application/CV- Different perspectives?
- Candidates with the right technical/professional skills
  - Can the candidate do the job?
- How to evaluate: (Easier)
  - Required skills described in the job advert
  - Candidates’ skills in their applications
  - Level of competencies evaluated from the application and interviews

Showing the right skills will get doors to open…

… but you are not in yet
What a recruiter is looking for? (Part 2)

> Candidates with the right attitude
  • Would this candidate fit in the project?
  • Is the candidate keen?
  • What does motivate the candidate in general? Can the job motivate him?
> How to evaluate? (Much harder)
  • Way the application is received
  • Cover letter gives indication on motivation on candidate’s interest
  • Application indicates aspect of the candidate’s personality – what he chose to do in his past.
  • Initial phone discussions also contributes to making a first opinion

The 2nd phase of the recruitment process mainly concentrates on this part

A good day in a recruiter’s life...

> Good applications
  • Succinct straight-to-the-point applications
  • Information easy to find
  • Skills we are after on the application/interview
> We make an offer
  • The candidate we have met is the right one for the job
> Our offer is accepted
  • Vacancy is filled

We do not enjoy rejecting candidates!

How and when to apply?

> Identify companies that are suitable for you
  • Company culture
  • Roles that suit you
  • Jobs on offer
> Find out how the companies receive applications
  • Spontaneous or targeted applications?
  • Deadlines?
  • Online applications? CVs?
> A case for spontaneous applications…

CVs & Applications

CVs

> Curriculum vitae / CV (‘resume’ in North America) ‘the course of one’s life’ summarised in a very structured manner
> You decide what you put on it
> It does not get you the job, it gets you through the door to the next stage
> It is your marketing tool
> Be succinct, accurate and ensure it is well laid out

4 Main Types of CVs

> Chronological
  • Focuses information based around dates. Information is placed under these dates.
> Skills based
  • Focus is on the competency areas that you feel are relevant to the job
> Targeted
  • Focus is on highlighting only the skills you feel show your aptitude for the position
> Academic
  • Highlights academic achievement and education connected activities
Example CVs

Discussion

Biographical Data

- Full name (highlighted at the top of your CV)
- Full address(es) – term-time and permanent
- Telephone number(s) – land line and mobile
- E-mail address(es) – term and home
- Date of birth?
- Marital status (optional)?
- Nationality?

This is important to recruiters!

Profile / Objective Statement

Don’t write an Objective Statement that is “Flowery”, too General or vague

- Bad: “A challenging position that will enable me to contribute to organizational goals while offering an opportunity for growth and advancement.”
- Better: Outline of your profile and objectives for your future job (using descriptive adjectives)

Example: “Student engineer with a passion for wireless communication looking for a 12 months industrial placement in your wireless engineering department, starting June 2007”. I am eager to find an opportunity to put my skills and enthusiasm into practice and get involved in hands-on aspects of your latest industry projects”

Customize your CV for each employer/Job

Skills Summary

- A skills summary section is one of the greatest tools that a job seeker has.
- Candidates who have done their homework will know the type of skills and competencies that are important in the position.
- The summary should demonstrate the skill level and experiences directly related to the position being sought.

Example:
- Software: Oracle- Design and Admin 1 year whilst working at…
- Programming languages: C/C++, Java- 6 months on major project

GET YOURSELF NOTICED

But… Connect the skills to your experience

Work Experience Example

Nortel, June 2001 – August 2002 - Network Support Engineer

- Provided first line customer support for TAS (Technical Assistance and Support)
- Worked as part of a project team to design and implement an Oracle/Business objectives reporting tool
- Unix system administration for several HP servers
- Etc……………….

Achievements, hobbies & interests

- Bullet point any other achievements that you have e.g.: language skills, computer literacy skills, academic awards, student association responsibilities, school achievements – Duke of Edinburgh, etc
- Try to use them to demonstrate competencies / abilities e.g.: I enjoy playing football. I am Captain of the Engineering Society football team which involves organising the games, equipment, etc.

- Water-skiing (qualified instructor)
- Travelling (details…)
Power Words

> Could you use any of the following verbs to explain your activities?
  - Liaised, Organised, Supervised, co-ordinated, Negotiated, Implemented, Formulated, Investigated, Researched, Initiated, succeeded, evaluated

> What about these positive words:
  - Notable, practical, opportunity, substantial, thorough, enhanced, resilient, opportunity, instrumental, determined, individual, active, proficient, achievement, impact, effective, enthusiastic, progress

CVs – Final hints and tips

> Contrary to popular opinion bold unique fonts on fluorescent pink paper will not help you stand out, it will just give the recruiter a migraine and end up in the bin!!!
> Use a clear standard font (eg. Arial, Times New Roman), as it may be scanned into a computer.
> A MAXIMUM of 2 pages, unless otherwise stated.
> Ensure there is continuity in dates
> Spell Check it & get a friend to check it.
> Bullet points where possible – don’t be tempted to write a story

Just For Fun – Resume Blunders

> "Suspected to graduate early next year."
> "Proven ability to track down and correct errors."
> "I am a rabid typist."
> "Here are my qualifications for you to overlook."
> "After receiving advice from several different angels, I have decided to pursue a new line of work."
> "Am a perfectionist and rarely if ever forget details."
> "Accomplishments: Completed 11 years of high school."
> "Please disregard the enclosed resume—it is terribly out of date."
> "My compensation should be at least equal to my age."
> "Reason for Leaving: It had to do with the IRS, FBI and SEC."
> "Reason for Leaving: The owner gave new meaning to the word 'paranoia.' I prefer to elaborate privately."

Bad Humor

> "Title: Another resume from the 'Profiles in Excellence' series."
> "Note: Keep this resume on top of the stack. Use all others to heat your house."
> "Also Known As: Mr. Productivity, Mr. Clever, Mr. Fix-it."
> "Assisted in daily preparation of large quantities of consumable items in a fast-paced setting." (Translation: Short-order cook.)
> "But wait...there's more. You get all this business knowledge plus a grasp of marketing that is second nature."
> "I have an excellent track record, although I am not a horse."
> "My fortune cookie said, 'Your next interview will result in a job'—and I like your company in particular."
> "Trustworthy references available upon request—if I give them a few bucks."
> "Let's meet so you can 'ooh' and 'ahh' over my experience."

Cover Letters & Cover Emails

> Opportunity to highlight some key points of why the recruiter should choose you to interview! 
> Do not re-write CV!
> Needs to be a professionally formatted letter/Email
> UK – always type – never hand write
> Address letter to named person wherever possible
> If no name available do not be gender specific!
> Always sign the letter – personal touch!
> Ensure it is spell checked
> Short, punchy sentences, no more than 1 page long

Application Forms

Key point is to highlight why you want this specific job and why you are interested in the Company that you are applying to
**Application Forms**

- A fairer opportunity for all candidates.
- Standardisation helps employers to get all the information they want unlike a CV.
- Legal reasons for using Application forms.
- May be paper but most of the time, they are online now.
- Level of detail required can vary enormously.
- Often they are competency based forms – ‘Describe an occasion…’

**Application Form Tips**

- Prepare and use the CV as the base of your answers.
- Take copies: Before for practice & afterwards to prepare for the interview.
- Follow instructions and read carefully. Take your time!
- Try to understand why the questions are being asked: Describe responsibilities or achievements bearing in mind the skills the employer is seeking.
- Structure answer with: Circumstances – Action – Result.
- Use varied examples and be specific not vague.
- Focus upon:
  - Key words that demonstrate evidence of your skills.
  - Demonstrating behaviours rather than seeking to impress an employer with an amazing achievement.
- Open pages: Try to structure the space allocated using key headings in accordance with what is requested.

**Practice Questions**

- Group 1: Planning, implementation and achieving results:
  - Describe a challenging project, activity or event which you have planned and taken through to a conclusion. Include your objective, what you did, any changes you made to your plan and state how you measured your success.
- Group 2: Influencing, communication and teamwork:
  - Describe how you achieved a goal through influencing the actions or opinions of others (perhaps in a team context). What were the circumstances? What did you do to make a difference? How do you know the result was satisfactory?
- Group 3: Analysis, problem solving and creative thinking:
  - Describe a difficult problem that you have solved. State how you decided which were the critical issues, say what you did and what your solution was. What other approaches could you have taken?
- Group 4: Use the space below to describe with dates (year) any part-time activities.
  - Include organising, leading or group activities. Those requiring initiative, creativity or giving intellectual development are also of interest.

**Example Application form**

**Q & A**

**Nortel Student Centre**

- Are you studying for a degree in a Technical subject?
- Are you interested in a career in Telecoms?

Then the Nortel Student Centre is for you!!

- It’s the essential resource for:
  - Latest Nortel graduate and student vacancy advertising
  - Sign up for auto emails so we email you when a job comes up
  - Careers advice from recent graduate hires to experienced managers
  - Latest news from Nortel Across the world
  - Insider know-how from the telecoms industry

GET YOURSELF NOTICED
Come and Visit today