

THE JOHN MARSHALL LAW SCHOOL CAREER SERVICES JOB SEARCH GUIDE

III. RESUMES

There is no one way to draft a resume. Our goal is to provide you with solid advice on effective strategies for preparing a resume, as well as point out some pitfalls to avoid.

The purpose of a resume is to get you an interview. It is a marketing piece and may be your first point of contact with potential employers.

You can think of a resume as an advertisement – it provides a quick overview of what you have to offer to the employer. The resume cannot, nor should it, tell the reader all that there is to know about you. However, it should entice the reader to learn more.

Be Concise and Accurate

Your resume should be focused, concise and completely error-free. A resume is not an autobiography. You should not include every accomplishment and every job you have held. Instead, you should include those jobs and accomplishments which exemplify your skills and show an employer that you can do the job. And remember – this should be done in an honest and typo-free manner.

An Example of Your Writing Ability

Resumes also show employers your organizational and writing abilities. This is your first writing sample an employer will see, and it should highlight your ability to organize your thoughts and communicate effectively in writing.

Remember, an employer will look at your resume for less than a minute. Every word counts.

A Way to Better Understand What You Want

Finally, drafting resumes serves a purpose for you as well. Effective resumes are focused – they highlight your skills and abilities as they relate to your long-term goals. Accordingly, by choosing skills and experiences

For example, you may have been a reporter for your undergraduate school's newspaper. That experience can be used to highlight your researching and writing skills, as well as your ability to meet deadlines. Once you have identified your relevant experience and your transferable skills you will have the ingredients for the "Experience" section of your resume, which provides an overview of your work history.

to discuss with an employer, you are assessing your strengths, as well as forming a vision of your career goals. In writing your resume, become familiar with your assets, know what skills you can bring to a new job and get comfortable talking about them. This will not only help you with making the most persuasive argument to give you an interview, but also better prepare you for the interview when it comes.

GETTING STARTED

If you have never written a resume before, begin by making a list of everything you have done since (but not including) high school - all your achievements, awards, volunteer and paid jobs, internships, activities, computer skills, languages or other skills. If you have a pre-law school resume, take it out and see if you have missing items.

Once you have everything in front of you, identify overriding themes of skills and experiences. Use these themes as a basis for organizing and presenting your resume.

Transferable Skills

Highlight any legal experience you have had either prior to or during law school. Next, highlight those activities and experiences, which show transferable skills - skills from non-legal jobs and experiences which are applicable to the legal profession. These skills include:

- ❖ Leadership
- ❖ Interpersonal skills
- ❖ Research and writing
- ❖ Motivation
- ❖ Work ethic
- ❖ Attention to detail
- ❖ Supervisory experience
- ❖ Training skills
- ❖ Organization skills
- ❖ Ability to handle multiple tasks

Transferable skills are not limited solely to paying jobs. Leadership positions in sororities, fraternities, and other organizations provide examples of various transferable skills, as do community service and extracurricular activities. Transferable skills can and should be featured throughout your resume.

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Resume Presentation

Legal resumes are conservative in their format. You catch an employer's interest by the content of your resume, not the paper color or font. The goal is a clear outline and organization. The sample resumes at the end of this section should give you some ideas. None of them is an "ideal" resume but they provide suggestions for formatting and descriptions.

You are strongly cautioned against using any portion of these resumes word for word. John Marshall students' resumes are often sent to the same employers. If an employer sees the same wording from two or more students, he or she will assume you are somewhat limited in your creativity.

Paper

Choose high quality, "resume bond" paper in white, off-white or pale cream. The paper should contain a watermark. Buy matching envelopes and extra paper for cover letters and references.

Font Style

Use a simple font such as Times New Roman, Arial or Century Schoolbook. Avoid cute fonts that look like handwriting or elaborate fonts. Remember that your resume may be faxed, scanned, or photocopied numerous times by the employer; the more complicated the font, the more blurred it will become over time.

Font Size & Effects

Use the **bold**, *italic*, or underline commands in addition to capital letters to emphasize information in your resume. Do not go overboard, though; too much bold and nobody will know what you really want to emphasize. Along those lines, always be consistent in how you emphasize text.

For example, whenever you list the institutions you have attended and the employers for whom you have worked, you could present them in **bold**. Similarly, when listing degrees you have attained and the job titles you have held, you could present them in *italics*. That way, an employer can very quickly scan your resume and identify where you have been (in **bold**) and the title of what you have done (in *italics*).

Example:

Joe's Restaurant, Waukesha, Wisconsin
Waitress May 2002 – August 2005

Finally, you should avoid mixing fonts or font sizes (except for headings).

Point size for resume content should range from 10 to 12. Point size for your name should range from 12 to 18.

Length

Try to keep your resume to *one page*. Some exceptions to the one-page rule include extensive (more than 10 years) pre-law school experience; intellectual property, where describing technical experience and publications may require more than one page; public interest, if you have experience relevant to the position applied for; and academic resumes which would include publications, presentations and conferences.

RESUME FORMAT

Heading

Your name, address, phone number, and e-mail (if you use it) should appear at the top. Your name should be in bold and two or four points larger than the rest of the resume. If you are looking for a position in your hometown outside of Chicago, list your "Current Address" or "School Address" in the Chicago area and your "Permanent Address" in the town where you are seeking work. Do not include a "Permanent Address" if you are seeking work in Chicago and do not intend to return home.

Though tempting, you may not want to list your cellular phone number. Unless you screen your phone calls, you could have the embarrassing situation of trying to speak with an employer in a noisy or otherwise inconvenient location, or risk yelling due to a bad connection.

When listing your e-mail address, list an account that you check on a regular basis. In addition, the account should have a professional address. Though partyanimal@yahoo.com may have a fun and friendly feel, it probably will not send a message of maturity to future employers. Do not have your e-mail address in blue or underlined.

Education

The education section should come next, written in reverse chronological order beginning with your law degree. Other education such as study abroad, paralegal or graduate degrees should also be listed. For each school list the city and state, degree received (or

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to be received), the month and year of graduation, and major field of study (if appropriate).

Following the degree information, you may list your class rank (typically students list their class rank if they are in the top half or better) and GPA (typically students list GPA if approximately 3.0 or higher). You may also list any honors, scholarships, and school activities. Also, include the leadership positions you held or projects you handled while in school.

Activities and honors (such a *summa, magna, or cum laude* written in italics) should be highlighted and listed under where and when they were received. Use **bold, italics** or indentation to draw attention. If you do not have any honors, you should put any activities relevant to the school or your course of study. Include any associations you belong to and special activities.

Coursework is typically not included, though it may be useful to list technical/scientific courses when applying for intellectual property positions.

Be sure to clarify lesser-known achievements. For example, Beta Gamma Sigma may not mean much to an employer if you do not also identify it as a business honor society.

Experience

List your positions in reverse chronological order. Include the name of the employer, location, dates of employment and your title followed by a description. You want to list any work experience (paid or unpaid) that is relevant to the position you are applying for or that would be helpful in communicating your qualifications.

Your descriptions should be active, not passive, and descriptive of the work activity rather than of job duties. For example, assume that you had a job working at a women's shelter. You could write:

Fair: Responsible for client intake and reports.

However, a much more active and descriptive way to present the position would be:

Good: Conducted client intake and drafted reports.

To provide even greater context, you could write:

Best: Conducted intake interviews to determine scope of abuse and appropriate services to provide. Drafted initial reports for client files.

In your employment descriptions, try to use skills applicable to the practice of law, such as: writing, analyzing, researching, organizing, arguing, advocating, public speaking, coordinating, creating, persuading, delegating, editing, assessing, estimating, planning, and supervising.

Your descriptions should be concise, yet specific. Use concise phrases separated by periods, semicolons, or commas, or on separate bulleted lines. Always try to quantify the information.

Examples:

- ❖ Drafted pre-trial motions in various civil litigation matters, coordinated staff of 10 and participated in all phases of negligence practice.
- ❖ Researched case material for more than 25 cases for a firm specializing in matrimonial law. Wrote summaries to assist trial research. Organized case files.

Discuss specific motions you wrote, areas of law you researched and projects you worked on. Use active verbs and concrete statements. See the action verbs list for more suggestions.

If you did not come to law school directly from college, you need to account for the time period in-between. Try not to leave gaps in your resume and/or be prepared to discuss any gaps.

When describing what you did, you must strike the sometime-difficult balance of using short verb phrases and providing substantive context. Remember to focus on your transferable skills, especially if you do not have legal experience.

Examples:

- ❖ Assisted in designing marketing plan for summer 1999 product line; balanced sales receipts totaling more than \$2,000 per shift; handled customer questions and concerns.
- ❖ Sold merchandise and managed inventory for an upscale men's clothing chain. Responded to customer questions and concerns. Regulated opening and closing procedures.

NOTE: Depending on your experience and what you are trying to convey, the above may or may not directly serve your purposes. As you progress through law school and your legal career, descriptions will tend to become lengthier as you specify legal experiences and areas of practice.

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Some people choose to label this section EXPERIENCE and include everything. Others subdivide this section into LEGAL EXPERIENCE and one or more additional categories, such as PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE, or OTHER EXPERIENCE.

Patent students may want to create a separate TECHNICAL or PATENT EXPERIENCE section on their resume. Either approach is fine, provided there is a logical reason for organization of the section(s); i.e., it may make sense to have just one EXPERIENCE section if you have only had one legal job.

A final point concerns addressing jobs that you feel do not relate even tangentially to the practice of law. For example, some students may feel that they should not include certain college jobs, such as washing dishes at a restaurant or working as a bouncer at a bar.

Ultimately, inclusion or exclusion is your choice. One option is to include the job, and rather than describe the position, simply state, “Worked 20-30 hours a week while attending classes full-time” or however else best describes the balance of work and school. Also, if there were other unique attributes to the position, you should feel free to include them.

Additional Sections

Although the education and experience sections tend to be the most important sections on your resume, employers like to see additional sections on your resume, such as:

Publications

This can include law journal, undergraduate or graduate research, and articles for other publications. Remember to use proper Bluebook citations.

Languages

Include a language if you can carry on a basic conversation. Make sure to indicate your level of proficiency.

Computer Skills

Word, WordPerfect, LexisNexis and Westlaw are no longer considered special skills. However, if you are certified by LexisNexis or Westlaw, mention such certification either in this section or under your law school section. Any computer programming, Internet language, design software, spreadsheets or databases can be included.

However, you must remember your audience. Ask yourself, is this information that the employer reading your resume will care to know?

Community Service/Volunteer

This type of experience may communicate aspects of your talents and personality which may not be

apparent in your other resume information. It may show leadership qualities, social awareness, community involvement, and other attributes important to legal employers. This is especially important for government and public service jobs.

Personal Interests

This section is entirely optional. If you do include it, be sure to list interesting activities that could be good interview ice breakers (e.g. “volleyball” and not “sports” or “American poetry” and not “reading”). The more specific you are, the easier it will be for the interviewer to turn it into a conversation piece.

Professional Associations, Licenses, and Training

This section describes additional professional memberships and specialized training that may be useful to an employer.

WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE ON A LEGAL RESUME

Just as there are certain items that should be included on your legal resume, there are also certain categories of items that should be left off. Examples include:

Objective

An Objective Section is not included on a legal resume. Your objective is considered obvious - to find a legal job. Any further clarification should be put in your cover letter.

References Available Upon Request

This line is not necessary. It is expected that you will have a reference list available. Employers will ask you for references if they want them.

Personal Statistics

Your marital status, age, height, weight, religious affiliation, etc., do not belong on your resume. They are not relevant to legal employment, and in some cases, employers are restricted from even discussing them.

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Graphics, Colored Ink, etc.

As previously stated, your experience is what makes your resume stand out, not design tactics. Keep the format of the resume simple and only use black ink.

ADDITIONAL RESUME TIPS

Obviously there is a lot to think about as you prepare your resume. To ease the process for you, below are some tips we have accumulated over the years:

- ❖ Proofread, proofread, proofread.
- ❖ The proper name of the school is: “The John Marshall Law School.”
- ❖ Your degree is a “Juris Doctor” or “J.D.” not a “Juris Doctorate.”
- ❖ Graduation dates are either January or May.
- ❖ Do not give your section letter, only your graduation year. Example:
The John Marshall Law School, Chicago, Illinois
Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2008
- ❖ List clinics, research assistantships, judicial extern, and litigation externships under Experience, not Education, and describe what you did.
- ❖ Ranks are calculated only after the fall and spring semesters. You may get your rank from the Registrar. **NEVER** estimate your rank. If you are using your number rank and your rank is listed in a range, you must give the full range on your resume (e.g., 12-18/258). For purposes of converting a rank within a range into a percentage, use the lowest number within the range (e.g., if you are 12-18/258, divide 12 into 258). When calculating your rank as a percentage, you must round up if the decimal is .5 or higher (e.g., if your rank is 14.6%, then you must round up to Top 15%, but if it is 14.4% your rank is Top 14%).
- ❖ Your grade point average (GPA) is calculated after every semester, including summer. When listing your GPA, you must go two digits to the right of the decimal (e.g., GPA: 3.12). When rounding your GPA to the hundredth, you may round up if the decimal is .5 or higher (e.g., if your GPA is 3.1275, then you may list your GPA as 3.13), but you must round down if the decimal is lower than .5 (e.g. if your GPA is 3.1444, you would list it as 3.14).

- ❖ *The John Marshall Law Review*, *The Journal of Computer and Information Law* (JCIL), *Review of Intellectual Property Law* (RIPL) and Moot Court belong in Education under John Marshall as an honor.
- ❖ The correct listing for law review is: THE JOHN MARSHALL LAW REVIEW. You may only list this journal if you accept the offer to be on the publication and participate. A student may not list a journal if the offer was declined.

(To list an item in “small caps” in Word, do the following:
 1. Highlight the applicable text
 2. Click on Format, then on Font
 3. Check the “Small caps” box. The selected text should have been converted from “Text” to “TEXT”))
- ❖ The correct listing for JCIL is: THE JOURNAL OF COMPUTER & INFORMATION LAW. You may only list this journal if you accept the offer to be on the publication and participate. A student may not list a journal if the offer was declined.
- ❖ The correct listing for RIPL is: REVIEW OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW. You may only list this journal if you accept the offer to be on the publication and participate. A student may not list a journal if the offer was declined.
- ❖ Do not include your LSAT score.
- ❖ Avoid using personal pronouns when writing descriptions.
- ❖ There is no comma between the month and the year; e.g. May 2004
- ❖ If you held several positions with the same employer, list the employer name and location as you normally would and underneath include separate entries for each position worked.

Example:

Aetna Insurance, Chicago, Illinois
Supervisor, June 2002 – Present
[job description.....]

Claims Representative, July 1999-June 2002
[job description.....]

**ACTION VERBS FOR
RESUME SKILL
DESCRIPTIONS**

Accelerated
Accomplished
Accounted for
Achieved
Acquired
Adapted
Addressed
Administered
Advanced
Advised
Aided
Allocated
Analyzed
Anticipated
Applied
Appointed
Appraised
Approved
Arbitrated
Argued
Arranged
Assessed
Assigned
Assisted
Assumed
Assured
Attained
Authored
Audited
Augmented
Bolstered
Briefed
Broadened
Brought
Built
Calculated
Catalogued
Caused
Chaired
Changed
Checked
Clarified
Classified
Closed

Collaborated
Combined
Communicated
Compared
Completed
Compiled
Composed
Computed
Conceived
Concluded
Conducted
Confronted
Constructed
Consulted
Contributed
Controlled
Converted
Conveyed
Convinced
Coordinated
Corrected
Correlated
Corresponded
Counseled
Crafted
Created
Critiqued
Dealt
Debated
Decreased
Decided
Defended
Defined
Delegated
Delivered
Demonstrated
Designed
Detailed
Determined
Developed
Devised
Directed
Discovered
Distributed
Drafted
Earned
Edited
Engineered
Enlarged
Established
Evaluated

Exceeded
Executed
Expanded
Expedited
Financed
Foresaw
Formed
Formulated
Founded
Generated
Governed
Grouped
Guided
Handled
Identified
Implemented
Improved
Increased
Influenced
Initiated
Inspected
Inspired
Installed
Instituted
Integrated
Interacted
Interpreted
Interrogated
Interviewed
Introduced
Invented
Investigated
Justified
Keynoted
Launched
Led
Listened
Litigated
Maintained
Managed
Marketed
Mediated
Met
Moderated
Monitored
Motivated
Negotiated
Nominated
Observed
Operated
Organized

Originated
Oversaw
Performed
Persuaded
Planned
Pleaded
Practiced
Prepared
Presented
Procured
Produced
Promoted
Proposed
Prosecuted
Provided
Recruited
Regulated
Reinforced
Represented
Researched
Resolved
Reviewed
Revised
Revived
Rewrote
Scheduled
Secured
Selected
Served
Settled
Set up
Shaped
Solved
Spoke
Sponsored
Staffed
Strengthened
Structured
Succeeded
Summarized
Supervised
Surpassed
Surveyed
Taught
Tested
Trained
Used
Wrote

SAMPLE RESUMES

A NOTE OF CAUTION: You are being supplied with several samples. If you parrot any of these phrases word for word you are doing yourself a disservice. John Marshall students often send resumes and cover letters to the same employers. If a given employer receives two or more resumes that use the same wording, he or she will know you copied the language or idea. This has happened several times in the past and it is embarrassing for both the student and the law school when employers call the Career Services Office to complain.

SAMPLE RESUME FORMAT

Your Name (12-18 size)

Address (10-12 size)

Phone

Email

(your name and contact information should be placed in a clear format at the top of the resume)

EDUCATION

The John Marshall Law School, Chicago, Illinois

Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2009

GPA: ___ Class Rank: Top ___% of class (Add these after first semester grades - this is optional but will usually be included if approximately 3.0, top 50%, or better.)

- List law school honors and activities in these bullets
-

Undergraduate University, City, State

Bachelor of ___, *Major*, Month and year received

GPA: ___ (this is optional but will usually be included if approximately 3.0 or better.)

- List undergrad honors and activities in these bullets
-

EXPERIENCE (should be listed from most recent employer first)

Name of Employer, City, State

Job Title, Dates

Describe your experience in functional terms. Briefly list responsibilities and duties. Stress your accomplishments more than anything else. Use action verbs to start statements. You may use bullets or paragraph format.

Name of Employer, City, State

Job Title, Dates

Describe your experience in functional terms. Briefly list responsibilities and duties. Stress your accomplishments more than anything else. Use action verbs to start statements. You may use bullets or paragraph format.

COMPUTER SKILLS (Optional Section)

Do not include the basics like Word.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE (Optional Section)

Fluency, level of proficiency, conversational, ability to read

PUBLICATIONS (Optional Section) Make sure to use correct Blue Book format

COMMUNITY SERVICE (Optional Section) Any recent volunteer experiences

INTERESTS (Optional Section) The more specific, the better (2 or 3 items)

Helen O. Troy

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EDUCATION:

The John Marshall Law School, Chicago, Illinois

Juris Doctor Candidate May 2006

GPA: 3.01; Class Rank: 128/321 (Top 40%)

- Dean's List: Fall 2002, Spring 2003
- *Activities*: Moot Court Council; Corporation Law Association; Employee Benefits Organization; American Bar Association, student member

University of Greece, Troy, Michigan

Bachelor of Science in Finance, Minor in International Marketing, May 1994

GPA: 3.05

- Worked 20 hours a week while attending school full-time
- *Activities*: Gamma Phi Beta Sorority (Treasurer); Finance Association; Society of Advanced Management/Society of Human Resource Management

EXPERIENCE:

The John Marshall Law School, Chicago, Illinois

Professor Ann Lousin Research Assistant, March 2003 to Present

Research and draft summaries in areas of insurance coverage, bankruptcy, invasion of privacy, and securities law.

Price Waterhouse Investments, Burlington, Iowa and Chicago, Illinois

Investment Education Consultant, September 1999 to August 2002

Presented investment and retirement educational seminars to the company's largest 401(k) clients and their employees. Instructed and consulted to small and large groups on a variety of topics, including: asset allocation and diversification, IRS regulations, evaluating mutual funds, and investment principles. Led, designed and implemented several departmental initiatives and projects, including internal instruction on presenting techniques and improvements. Mentored newly hired employees.

Retirement Specialist, June 1998 to September 1999

Consulted high net worth 401(k) participants on estate planning, income planning, investment strategies, and special tax treatments. Conducted and designed new hire training and continuous education classes within department.

Customer Service Representative, June 1997 to June 1998

Analyzed and communicated applicable tax rules and retirement issues while assisting qualified retirement plan participants in investment related decisions. Supervised 55 temporary associates.

PROFESSIONAL AWARDS AND LICENSES:

- *Price Waterhouse Investments*: Perfect Performance for all applicable years (1997 to 1999); Highest possible yearly review score 4/5 years; "Rookie of the Year" award (1997-98), and several Outstanding Performance awards.
- *Memberships/Licenses*: Member of and licensed by the National Association of Securities Dealers (Series 6, 7, and 63), since 1999.

Paul J. Pierce

454 Fleet Center Avenue, Naperville, IL. 60580

(708) 555-5656

paulpierce@hotmail.com

EDUCATION

The John Marshall Law School, Chicago Illinois

Juris Doctor Candidate, January 2007

GPA: 3.25

Class Rank: 36/141

Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts

Bachelor of Science in Economics, May 2000

Minor in Broadcast Electronic Communications

New England Music Conservatory, Boston, Massachusetts

Completed 4 year study and practice of Ethnomusicology, May 2000

EXPERIENCE

Bird & McHale, Chicago, Illinois

Legal Clerk, May 2004 – August 2004

- Researched Illinois case law involving property law, personal injury, and municipal liability.
- Prepared and presented oral briefs of pertinent researched material.
- Monitored and managed active client files and case material of managing partners and 6 associates in a civil defense law firm.
- Scheduled motions, court dates, and drafted subpoenas.

Big Chief Security, Boston, Massachusetts

Loss Prevention Agent, August 2001 - December 2003

- Advised senior store managers in the Colorado territory on loss prevention techniques.
- Drafted and maintained confidential reports pertaining to incidents of retail theft.
- Monitored retail inventory and investigated theft in Safeway supermarkets.
- Coordinated and implemented security measures within Safeway stores to prevent and deter retail theft.
- Supervised and trained 3 new employees.
- Confronted and assisted with the apprehension of thieves.

Red's Music Productions, Denver, Colorado

Executive Sales Manager & Part Time Production Assistant, December 2000 - August 2001

- Managed sales department for a CD-ROM reproduction company.
- Negotiated daily with vendors to broker CD duplication for large business clients.
- Coordinated entire product supply chain of material vendors and product distributors with the in-house graphic design and marketing departments.
- Personally maintained an average of 50 clients and supervised and trained all subordinates.
- Simultaneously assisted in the production of the most syndicated national college radio show in the country, *RED'S SHOW*

INTERESTS Avid fly fisherman, performance percussionist and drummer, basketball, hiking/backpacking

Ernie C. Banks
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Chicago, IL 60657
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EDUCATION

The John Marshall Law School, Chicago, IL

Juris Doctor Candidate May 2006

G.P.A.: 3.33 • Class Rank 88/321 • Top 27%

Honors:

- THE JOHN MARSHALL LAW REVIEW, Fall 2004
- Dean's List – Fall 2003 and Spring 2004

University of Dallas, Dallas, TX

Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts and Political Science, May 2000

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Law Offices of Roy Smalley, Chicago, IL

02/03

to 08/03

Law Clerk: Researched issues in business litigation. Drafted motions, memoranda, briefs, and discovery documents. Abstracted depositions and complaints. Organized and maintained files. Filed documents in federal and state courts. Accomplished assignments independently.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Tribune Print Media, Chicago, IL

12/01

to 7/02

USA Today Program Manager: Managed *USA Today's* exclusive remnant advertising program. Negotiated with *USA Today* representatives and agency clients. Monitored and maximized profit margins. Convened and led regular intra-agency meetings. Ensured program quality and resolved program issues by communicating with co-workers, vendors and clients.

Durocher & Associates Advertising, Chicago, IL

11/00

to 12/01

Account Coordinator: Developed and maintained working relationships with agency clients. Crafted advertising programs to increase client's brand presence. Negotiated advertising contracts with media vendors and clients. Advised clients in client meetings. Overhauled agency archives and information structure to achieve greater efficiency and minimize errors.

Monarch Print Media, Kansas City, MO

07/99

to 08/00

Intern/Sales Representative: Assisted development of marketing and advertising programs. Solicited new clients. Negotiated advertising sales contracts with clients. Cultivated and solidified client relationships.