

STATION #6: JOB INTERVIEW

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STATION PURPOSE:

Two team members will compete in the mock interview process. Each student will prepare a cover letter and resume and participate in an actual interview with an industry professional. By participating in this station, young people will have the opportunity to explore career choices in the cattle industry.

STATION STRUCTURE:

Prior to the day of the contest, students will prepare a cover letter and resume (see the tips for writing a good cover letter on the following page) for an *entry-level* beef-industry related job of their choosing. Areas of jobs can include, but are not limited to, production, agri-business or sales, vet assistant, communications or media, etc.

****The cover letter and resume should be received by the Iowa Cattlemen's Foundation**

NO LATER THAN November 15, 2023.**

THERE WILL BE A 20 POINT DEDUCTION FOR LATE APPLICATIONS.

In the case of a three-member team, only two will participate, the third will be an observer.

PRIOR to the competition, team members will identify who will interview for which position and submit their cover letter and resume.

Students are to create factual resumes relative to their current accomplishments. Judges realize more skills or education may be needed for the job opening however want to have an honest conversation with the students. Judges will discount resume information that is fictitious. Judges will be evaluating students more on their communication ability rather than their accomplishments thus far.

At the competition, team members will interview according to their category. Business casual attire is suggested. Students can take copies of their resume into the interview session. Interviews will last 15-20 minutes.

Each team member will be evaluated on his or her cover letter, resume and interview. Team member's scores will be added together and averaged to form a composite team score. Resumes will account for 40% of the score and the interview will account for 60% of the score total.

AREAS OF STUDY:

<i>Cover letters & resumes may be judged on, but are not limited to:</i>	<i>Interviewer may judge on, but are not limited to:</i>
<p>Content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Name, address and phoneJob Objective StatementEducationActivitiesWork Experience <p>Appearance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">NeatnessSpelling and Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">AppearanceProfessionalismAbility to answer questionsEnthusiasm & self-confidenceProper grammarStrong communication skills

Sample Questions for the interview:

- What experiences have you had that will help in this type of position?
- What special qualities do you have that would set you apart from other candidates? How will these qualities help you in the future?
- Tell me about your best accomplishment in the recent past. What special effort did you have to put forth to achieve this accomplishment?
- Tell me about a decision you made which backfired, and how did you handle it.
- Tell me about your short term (2-3) year goals; long term (5-10) year goals.
- What else would you like me to know about you at this time?

Tips for Writing a Good Cover Letter

Next to your resume, a well-written cover letter is the most valuable document you have in your job search toolkit. When written correctly, it can help your application stand out from the rest.

A cover letter is a concise document that outlines why your skills and experiences make you the best candidate for the job. It complements your resume and is a place to highlight important and relevant skills or accomplishments. And, you should do this in four paragraphs or less!

Before you begin crafting your cover letter, carefully read through the employer job description; this will help you understand your audience, and allow you to better tailor your cover letter to the reader. For instance, if you're applying to an agricultural communications agency and the job description indicates "creativity" as a job requirement; inject some of your creative accomplishments into your cover letter copy.

WRITING TIPS

- **Tailor your cover letter to each job you're applying to, always!** We cannot stress this enough. Your cover letter is a *personalized* document that you're using to convince the employer to look at your enclosed resume. Take some time to make sure you clearly state why you're the best candidate for the job, based on the qualifications the job description is asking for.
- **Don't rehash your resume in your cover letter.** Your cover letter is a *complementary* document and a place for you to establish a voice and target why your skills and experiences are a good fit for the job.
- **Make the reader's job easy by including the job title and the reference number in the reference line.** Include the date, your name and contact details in case your cover letter is separated from your resume during the application process.
- **Include where you heard about the job opening**, whether you saw the position on the employers website or heard about the position through a friend. If you were referred by an existing employee, include their name, this will help to set you apart.
- **Show, don't tell.** Use concrete examples to demonstrate to the reader how you developed a relevant skill or exceeded expectations in your current role.
- **Don't overcomplicate the sentences within your cover letter.** In other words, use plain language.
- **Avoid including meaningless, overused adjectives like:** aggressive, creative and independent. Instead, use action verbs like: wrote, managed, and collaborated with, to describe exactly what you accomplished.

FORMATTING TIPS

- **First Paragraph:** Introduce yourself, what job you're applying for, and where you heard about the position.
- **Second and Third Paragraphs:** This is the meat of your cover letter. In paragraph two, highlight any skills or experiences you've gained that fit with the qualifications in the job description. Use concrete examples and evidence to show the reader why you're a strong contender for the job. State growth numbers wherever possible. If you have a considerable amount of experience related to the position, it might be a good idea to break this section up into two separate paragraphs to make your cover letter easier to read.
- **Fourth Paragraph:** Thank the reader for their time and consideration and express again your interest in the position. Let the reader know you look forward to being reached at their earliest convenience to further discuss your interest and qualifications in the position. It's a good idea to list your contact information again in this paragraph.