



TOOLS FOR LIFE

A Series of Self-Help Booklets designed to
help students beyond the classroom into Life

NUMBER 2 The Effective Job Application

"Tools for Life"

Booklets published so far in the series:

- (1) Creative Job Search
- (2) The Effective Job Application
- (3) Getting to See the Man and Selling Yourself at the Interview
- (4) Creating Your Own Job
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Grateful acknowledgement is made to "The New Yorker" for the reproduction of various cartoons.

TOOLS FOR LIFE/Number 2

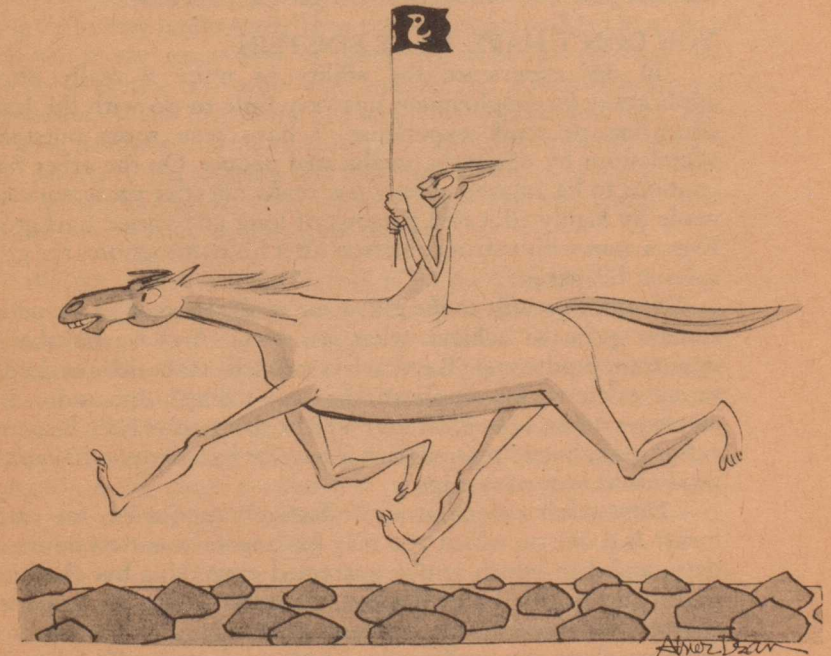
THE EFFECTIVE JOB APPLICATION

by GEOFF SPENCER

Director of Information Services, Vancouver Community College

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You're a man of destiny

SO YOU'RE BLUE-EYED AND BURSTING WITH TALENT? HOW DO YOU GET THE JOB?

Let's assume you're not one of nature's drifters, but know what you want and are now searching for the tools to achieve it. Probably the two most important things you'll ever do in life is to find both the right mate and the right job.

Creative Job Search implies using your head rather than your feet (though you'll do that too!). Somewhere OUT THERE is the employer with just the job you want. How do you get to him?

It's neither art, nor instinct nor science. There are, however, some basic guidelines which represent the gleanings of experience. Each man will apply them according to his own personality, but the ingredients are constant.

There are two steps: WRITING AN EFFECTIVE JOB APPLICATION, and SELLING YOURSELF AT THE INTERVIEW. In that order. It can't be stressed too strongly that worthwhile jobs are not awarded on the basis of the written job application. All that the job application does, if it's effective, is to get you into the short list for face-to-face interview. It's the interview that gets you the job, but if you don't know how to put together an effective job application in the first place, it's unlikely you'll get the interview.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE EINSTEIN . . .

In my experience the ability to write a really effective application for employment has very little to do with the level of education or work experience. I have seen some outstanding submissions by relatively uneducated people. On the other hand I continue to be amazed at how few really effective presentations are made by highly educated persons of long and varied background. Even a man with a string of letters after his name ignores the ground rules at his peril.

From the cradle to the grave, we're all salesmen of a kind in the endless quest to achieve what we want. And by far the most important product you'll ever sell is yourself. Make no mistake about it: an effective job application is a "selling" operation. If the employer doesn't "buy," it may well be that you've been beaten by a better man, but as often as not it may be because you haven't sold yourself to best advantage.

Now what exactly is an "effective" application for employment? Is it one on which you may have spent countless hours, even days, and into which you've crammed everything but the kitchen sink? The works, meticulously arranged: education, experience, avocational interest, professional activities? The answer is that diligence alone may well produce a good job application, but *it will be effective only if it gets you a personal interview.*

. . . TO SELL YOURSELF

How is it done? Consider the psychology of "Selling" yourself. In a buyer's market, the best of products don't sell themselves, though the salesman who can parrot a fluent presentation may sell a few. The salesman who succeeds *invariably*, rather than *exceptionally*, is the man who has analysed my needs as a potential purchaser. He has studied the target before shooting at it. If I'm the target, he will know a good deal about me *BEFORE* he sits down to write. Assuming that we're talking about a car, this man will have taken the trouble to determine the number and ages of my children, my annual mileage, whether or not I'm an outdoorsman, whether I'm prestige-conscious, a herdsman or a loner, what I earn and anything else he can reasonably be expected to find out by enquiry *BEFORE* he makes his pitch. He may have discovered that I'm interested less in the marque than in mileage, that I'm simply in the market for reliable transportation to meet my family needs. The topnotch salesman may have pinpointed my needs better than I could myself. Having profiled me, he is then in a position to stress those factors which will immediately strike a sympathetic chord. And make the sale.

In selling myself, it is worth noting — at least in my experience — that employers who advertise positions are seldom articulate in stating what they really need. They throw out generalized bait. As a consequence the man who is going to write an effective job application is the one who will analyse the advertisement, get information on the firm from any available source, and then, and only then, sit down to compose his letter. Such a letter will highlight those aspects of his training and experience best matched to meet those needs he has taken the trouble to discover and which may never have been mentioned in the advertisement.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THAT APPLICATION BLANK?

Supposing you are faced with a standardized application blank which seems to rule out any intelligently directed "slanting" of your submission. What then? Most sizeable employers use a blank to reduce all applicants to a comparable norm. But don't let that cramp your style. Your covering letter may well make the difference whether your application is tossed on to the pile of immediate rejects, or placed on the much smaller pile of those worth a closer look. Unless you capture the imagination of the reader, the attraction of the reject pile may be irresistible.

In filling out a blank you are supplying stereotyped answers to stereotyped questions. However, it is in the covering letter that you can reveal the result of your "homework," of how much you know about the employer's firm and his needs, of how you picture yourself as an effective means of solving his pre-established needs. Now the

plain fact is that employers tend to be egotists. They may not admit it in so many words, but the chances are that they will be attracted to you if you display a subtle knowledge about them and their requirements. In my own case I have had interviewers tell me openly that my covering letter told them more about their needs than they themselves had realized.

It's the psychology that's important, but there are a few specifics I have found worth noting.

Decide which order of presentation will best help the employer to relate *your* assets to *his* needs. The most common order for listing experience is chronologically from your first employment to date, or in the reverse order. Sometimes the pattern may be most effectively varied by listing experience in order of relevance to the vacant position, particularly if you can show why.

Applications should be complete but brief. The reader is likely to be a busy man (or thinks he is). Long narrative accounts seldom appeal. Some employers maintain that no summary need exceed one side of a single sheet. To achieve this is in itself an admirable exercise.

Be factual. Outline your qualifications and experience, but don't push yourself in general, meaningless terms. The employer will judge for himself if you're the man he wants.

Never criticize previous employers. It's dangerous. How does the employer know you won't be spinning the same tale about him some day?

Don't suppress pertinent information, particularly in terms of continuity of employment. However, if you've started some educational or training courses and haven't finished them, it is better to omit mention of the fact. Nothing will get you on to the reject pile quicker than the impression that you're a "starter" but not a "finisher."

Beware of influence-peddling. If your uncle happens to know the employer, don't start your covering letter with the frequently fatal sentence: "My uncle Bill told me to apply, etc." By all means, list references. The employer's eye will pick up a familiar name. But don't strongarm the employer in your first sentence.

Unless your handwriting is a thing of beauty (I have known applicants arouse interest because they wrote an immaculate italic script) find a typewriter and get the presentation decently typed and without obvious corrections.

And as a final thought, think of this: an employer hiring an applicant at age 25 for a relatively junior position offering a starting salary of \$700 per month, is making a potential investment of \$350,000 in salary and fringe benefits. He's earned the right to be selective.

Sample Resumés & Covering Letters

Here is an actual resumé from our Job Application File at the College. Only the name and address has been changed. It is concise and factual. Not only that, but the applicant went to the trouble of having it printed. When asked to give me an example of a resumé that had impressed him, the Personnel Manager produced this one:

RESUMÉ

WALTER G. BRACKEN
119 Park Road South
Hamilton, Ontario
L6E 2X1

MAJOR INTEREST

Methods or Records,
Manager/Analyst, Administrative or
Officer Services.

BASIC QUALIFICATIONS

Comprehensive background in records
systems, current and inactive.
Methods and manual systems
analysis. Warehousing and purchasing
experience.

EXPERIENCE

Mar. 15, 1971	METHODS ANALYST:	McMaster University
to	Performing Management studies to	
Present	ascertain problem areas for the	
	purpose of implementing more	
	efficient and economical records	
	systems, including Paperflow	
	Studies, Work Procedures, Filing	
	Systems, Records Retention	
	Scheduling, Archival and Vital	
	Records Protection, Forms	
	Analysis and Design,	
	Microfilming Systems, and	
	Security filming. Office and	
	Records Centre planning, staff	
	efficiency studies, design of	
	training programmes and	
	lecturing.	

Jan. 2, 1966 to Mar. 12, 1971	RECORDS ANALYST: Filing Systems and Procedures, Retention Scheduling, Records Storage and Protection, Microfilm- ing, Feasibility Studies, Report Writing, Records Centre Layouts including Forms Designs, Operating Procedures and staff training.	Canada Permanent Mort- gage Corporation/ Trust Company — Head Office
July, 1960 to Dec. 31, 1965	STATIONERY PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING: for supply to Branch Offices, managing Centralized File Areas, and Records Centre. (Supervising staff of 5).	Canada Permanent Mort- gage Corporation/Trust Company — Toronto Branch & Head Office
Aug. 28, 1956 to July, 1960	OFFICE JUNIOR: Mailroom duties, Savings Teller Foreign Exchange, Bank Deposits	Canada Permanent Mortgage Corporation — Toronto Branch

EDUCATION

Equivalent to Grade 13

Courses Attended:

Records Management, Forms Design, Microfilm Systems, Personnel
Management, Public Speaking, Production Management, English, Art,
Navigation (. . . plus other special interest courses).

—Member of Association of Records Managers and Administrators.

PERSONAL DATA

Marital Status: Married
Citizenship: Canadian
Date of Birth: 19/12/37
Height: 6 ft. 3 ins.
Weight: 195 lbs.
Health: Excellent

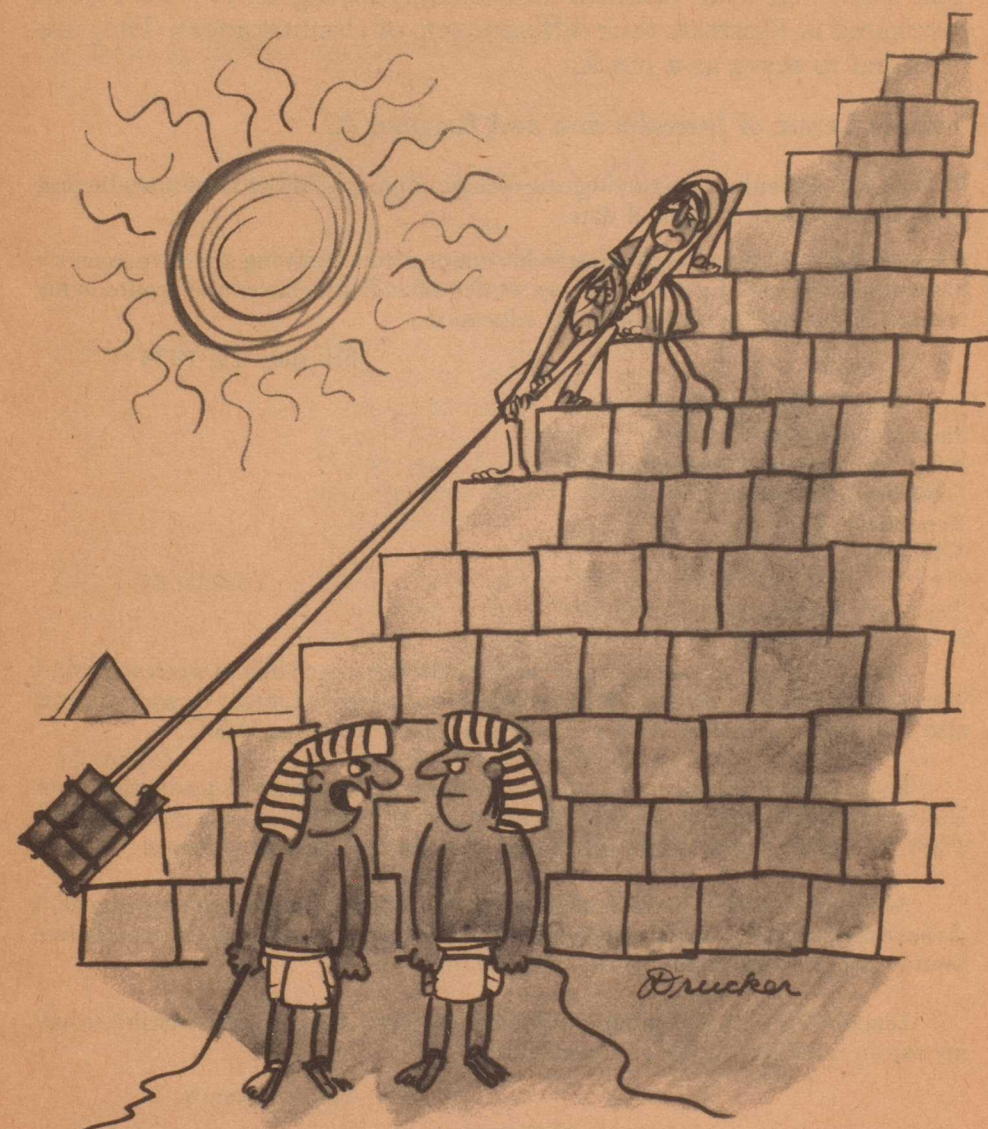
RESIDENCE HISTORY

Aug. 1956-1959	—	Toronto, Ontario
Nov. 1959-Nov. 1963	—	Richmond Hill, Ontario
Dec. 1963-Mar. 1971	—	Toronto, Ontario
Mar. 1971 to present	—	Hamilton, Ontario

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Reading, photography, wood-working, boating, swimming, camping,
skiing.

—Involved in various Executive Positions in social clubs.



*"There are plenty of jobs around. People just
don't want to work."*

The following four resumés and accompanying letters have been fabricated to illustrate four different sets of circumstances. They are intended to serve as a model:

Sample Letter of Introduction and Resumé A.

Because this individual is applying to a specific company, his letter of introduction is complete with heading and date.

Richard does lack work experience in his major field of training and consequently has emphasized his education. He was wise to include his classes and grades in his resumé as further fortification of his education.

February 15, 1976

Mr. John Fisher, Manager
Personnel Division
B.C. Development Corporation
1081 Seymour Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V8J 2Y3

Dear Mr. Fisher:

I am interested in your company and would very much like to work for you. I have looked up some of the facts in the Business Reference Library downtown and also discussed the matter with our own placement people at U.B.C.

If you care to consider a Bachelor of Business Administration graduating from U.B.C. in May of this year for one of your beginning jobs, I should be glad to attend a job interview at your convenience and complete the necessary forms.

Although I must tell you in all honesty that I have no industrial experience, I do have the desire no less than the motivation to do any job that is given to me better than it has ever been done before. Try me and see!

I enclose my personal resumé and sincerely hope you will find it possible to call me for an interview in the very near future.

Yours sincerely,

Richard F. Tucker
1506 West 14th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
V6G 3W1
(604) 224-5736

Enclosed: Job Resumé

JOB RESUMÉ

PERSONAL DATA: Richard F. Tucker
1506 West 14th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V6G 3W1
(604) 738-2611
Birthdate: January 14, 1948
Height: 5' 11"
Weight: 192 lbs.
Married, one child (6 months)
Health: Excellent

EDUCATION: University of British Columbia, B.C.
September 1972 to present, majoring in Business
Administration (Graduating May, 1976)
Vancouver Community College, Langara, 1969-1972,
Diploma in Data Processing
Graduating with honors from Lord Byng, Vancouver,
B.C. 1966

EMPLOYMENT: 1972 to present, Lewis' Shoe Store 672 West Broadway,
Vancouver, B.C. Part-time Bookkeeping
1970-72, Safeway, Vancouver and area, Clerk, evenings
and Saturdays
1968-72, Part-time Ski Instructor, Vancouver, B.C. area.

HOBBIES: Music, Reading and Skiing

REFERENCES: Rev. H. Manning, 1607 Wall Street, Vancouver, B.C.
Professor J. L. Magee, U.B.C. Department of Education,
Vancouver, B.C.
Mr. Alex Godfrey, Lewis' Shoe Store, 672 West
Broadway, Vancouver, B.C.



Sample Letter of Introduction and Resumé B.

Because the resumé was prepared for printing and mass mailing, both the heading and date are left off the letter of introduction. Each individual heading is to be typed on the letter at the time of mailing.

This man has over ten years of work experience which accounts for his emphasis on work experience rather than education.

At this point in his life, potential employers are more interested in the job he can perform relative to any college work. Of course all degrees and licenses are listed in the resumé.

In February 1963 I received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Engineering. At that time I was hired as a Design Engineer by B.C. Hydro and also started work on my Master's Degree in Business. In March 1970 I began working for Canadian Westinghouse as an application and sales engineer and in September 1970 received my Master's of Science Degree in Business Management.

While employed by B.C. Hydro, I designed high temperature and pressure piping systems, performed cost analysis, bids, coordinated work between various groups, established training programs designed to educate operators in all phases of equipment operation, and have prepared monthly and yearly operating reports stressing important activities.

The application of Westinghouse products requires complete knowledge of salesmanship concentrating on the user, engineering and contractor levels. Penetration has been required on the maintenance, operating, purchasing and engineering levels. While working with engineers on specification work, the basic tools of thermodynamics, fluid mechanics and boiler and piping codes are required. My job also requires that I give presentations and seminars to groups of sixty or more individuals.

Enclosed for your convenience is a brief resumé of my background. If you feel that you have any positions which require the education and experience described, I should be most happy to meet with you.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph Majors
#1502-1265 Balsom Ave.
NORTH VANCOUVER,
B.C.
V6H 2Y7
(604) 924-6713

Enclosure

RESUMÉ

RALPH MAJORS
1502-1265 Balsom Avenue
North Vancouver, B.C.
V6H 2Y7
(604) 924-6713

PERSONAL DATA

Birthdate: March 18, 1935
Height: 5'10"
Weight: 170 lbs.
Marital Status: Single
Health: Excellent
Citizenship: Canadian
Present Salary: \$20,000

EDUCATION

1957-1960: Vancouver Community College, Vancouver Vocational Institute — Diploma in Power & Process Engineering
1960-1963: University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. B.Sc. Mechanical Engineering
1963-1970: California Polytechnical College, San Luis Obispo, California
M.Sc. Business Administration (Management and Marketing)

LICENSE

Registered Professional Engineer, Province of British Columbia, #14489

EMPLOYMENT

1957-1963: City of Vancouver,
Worked weekends and summers while doing undergraduate work
1963-1970: B.C. Hydro, 970 Burrard, Vancouver, B.C.
Design Engineer in Power Plant Division
1970 to present: Canadian Westinghouse, 1000 Beach, Vancouver, B.C.
Sales and Application Engineer

REFERENCES

Mr. George J. Beaton, Manager, Royal Bank of Canada, Granville and Hastings Streets, Vancouver, B.C.
Mr. E. A. Fox, Supervisor, B.C. Hydro, 970 Burrard Street, Vancouver, B.C.
Mr. Fred McFarlane, Assistant Manager, Engineering Department, Canadian Westinghouse, 1000 Beach, Vancouver, B.C.

Sample Letter of Introduction and Resumé C.

Obviously this young lady has not worked full time for several years. The fact that she *jumped in* with the facts of her recent divorce and custody of small children is excellent. She then followed with a very strong presentation showing an excellent mental attitude and a strong desire to work.

The letter of introduction also has been prepared for printing with the date and heading left off; they are to be added to each letter as they are mailed.

Margaret York
1897 E. 52nd
Vancouver, B.C.
V9X 7J4
(604) 273-9708

In May 1975 I was granted a divorce and now have custody of my three minor children (7, 10, and 12). I have not worked full time in several years, but have worked part time and have been actively involved in several community activities.

I left college seven units short of receiving my Associate of Arts Degree. I did, however, receive the Vancouver Community College, Vancouver Vocational Institute Diploma in Secretarial Skills.

I have an excellent capacity to organize, plan, control and assign work to others. This has been exhibited by my work with the PTA, Cub Scouts and school bond drives. As President of the PTA I organized activities involving many parents and hundreds of children. I have also done typing for the schools on a volunteer basis.

While I do have responsibility for three children, they are well disciplined and healthy. They will not hinder, in any way, my carrying out a full-time job.

I am dedicated, energetic and most obviously in need of full-time work. I would prefer to work in customer service or any secretarial work which would involve filing or typing.

Enclosed for your convenience is a brief resumé of my background.

I shall be most happy to meet with you, at your convenience, for an interview.

Sincerely yours,

Margaret York

Enclosed: Job Resumé

JOB RESUME FOR: Margaret York
1897 E. 52nd Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V9X 7J4
(604) 273-9708

PERSONAL DATA:

Birthdate: July 5, 1941
Height: 5'3"
Weight: 115 lbs.
Marital
Status: Divorced
Children: Three (7, 10 and 12 years)
Health: Excellent

EDUCATION:

1958: Graduated John Oliver Secondary
School, Vancouver, B.C.
1960: Diploma in Secretarial Skills
received from Vancouver Community
College, Vancouver Vocation Institute
1960-62: Vancouver Community College,
Langara (lack 7 units toward an
A.A. Degree)

COMMUNITY SERVICES:

1967-69: PTA President
1970-72: Den Mother, Cub Scout Pack #58
1973-74: Chairman School Bond Drive

EMPLOYMENT:

1970-72: Part-time Waitress/Cashier
White Spot, Vancouver, B.C.
1972-74: Hostess/Cashier (Part-time)
Hotel Vancouver, Vancouver, B.C.



Sample Letter of Introduction and Resumé D.

In the lead paragraph of the **letter of introduction** the man applied for a specific position. He then followed up by expounding on his characteristics which make him desirable for the position.

Because he left high school before graduation, emphasis was placed on his capacity to work with his hands and repair machinery — *an obvious job requirement*.

It is more difficult for the non-high school graduate to get a responsible job so it is of paramount importance that several good references be included in the resume. Any supplementary education in high school or in correspondence courses, etc., should definitely be included.

Arnold Beecher
2176 E. Broadway
Vancouver, B.C.
V9K 7W8
(604) 265-8907

March 1, 1976

Mr. T. J. Styles
Personnel Manager
Gamlen Chemical Company
1494 Powell Street
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Mr. Styles:

The purpose of this letter is to apply for the position of Maintenance Helper advertised in the Vancouver Sun. While I have not had experience working with many varieties of machines, I have an excellent aptitude toward all types of mechanical equipment.

In June, 1972, I left Vancouver Technical High School without graduating. At that time I went to work for the B.C. Engines Co. Because of a cut in employment, I was laid off last month.

While in high school I did very well in all shop classes. I have an excellent ability to work with my hands and can build or repair just about anything mechanical. My main interest while in high school was in autos and auto shop.

I worked Saturdays and evenings at Ed's Gas Station while going to high school. That job required a good working knowledge of oils and lubricants plus the ability to read and understand lubrication charts and auto repair manuals. I also became skilled in the use of electronic equipment used in engine tune up.

While employed by B.C. Engine Co., I used micrometers to inspect crankshaft and cylinder wall tolerances. My responsibilities required that I assemble piston, piston rings, ristpin and connecting rod assemblies; then install them into the engine block. Other duties involved the proper torquing and pinning of the connecting rod bolts.

I am in good health, am rarely absent from work, am a hard conscientious worker and am willing to learn.

Enclosed is a brief resumé of my background. If you feel I have the qualifications for the Maintenance Helper position, I would be most happy to meet with you.

Sincerely yours,

Arnold Beecher

Enclosure

Arnold Beecher
2176 E. Broadway
Vancouver, B.C.
V9K 7W8
(604) 265-8907

PERSONAL DATA

Birthdate: March 21, 1954
Height: 5'8"
Weight: 165 lbs.
Marital Status: Single
Health: Good
Citizenship: Canadian

EDUCATION

1970-June 1972 · Vancouver Technical High School

EMPLOYMENT

June 1972-March 1976: B.C. Engines Company Ltd.
1768 E. Hastings
Vancouver, B.C.
September 1970-June 1972: Ed's Gas Station
1680 Kingsway
Vancouver, B.C.

HOBBIES

Member of the Downtown Judo Club of Vancouver
Restoring Antique Cars

REFERENCES

Mr. Douglas Geer, Vancouver Technical High School, 2700 E. Broadway,
Vancouver, B.C.
Mr. Edward Fuller, Ed's Gas Station, 1680 Kingsway, Vancouver, B.C.
Mr. Hugh Clarke, B.C. Engine Company, 1768 E. Hastings, Vancouver, B.C.



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VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

REGIONAL OFFICES

675 WEST HASTINGS STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C. V6B 1N2



Vancouver Community College is an educational complex consisting of five divisions:

- The Langara Campus,
- The Vancouver School of Art,
- The Vancouver Vocational Institute,
- King Edward Campus,
- Community Education Services.

In morning, afternoon and evening classes held in centres throughout Vancouver, the College offers the most flexible arrangements whereby those in the community who wish to further their education may undertake studies to obtain a variety of diplomas or certificates.

