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### RECRUITER IMPRESSIONS OF POTENTIAL FOR JOB-SPECIFIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL FIT IN RÉSUMÉ SCREENING: THREE FIELD STUDIES

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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0-612-42510-X



### ABSTRACT

Person-organization fit has been proposed as a key issue for organizational goal attainment, yet research on considerations of applicant-organization fit in the assessment of job applicant résumés does not exist in the published literature. However, résumé and job application form screening has been postulated to be the most prevalent employee selection process. The present program of research examined job-specific and organizational fit impressions gained by human resource professionals from résumés and the impact of such impressions on résumé screening decisions. Three field studies were performed with practicing human resources professionals, examining the influences of job-specific and organizational fit impressions on résumé screening decisions with survey, expert rater, and experimental approaches. Results indicated that human resources professionals look for both applicant-job and applicant-organization fit in résumé screening, rate them reliably and relatively distinctly, and make résumé screening decisions that reflect differences in both applicant-job and applicant-organizational congruence. Survey data indicated that although human resources professionals regarded skills-related aspects as the most important indicators of applicant-organization fit in the overall hiring process, each of four other aspects of applicant-organization fit (personality-culture fit, values congruence, goals-opportunities fit and industry fit) was rated as highly important in establishing such fit. Industry fit (i.e., fit between an applicant's experience and the target organization's industry) was regarded as least important in establishing applicant-organization fit. As predicted, indicators of applicantorganization fit were regarded as most important or useful in establishing fit for manager

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and experienced professional job categories, when compared with experienced technical support, entry-level university graduate, and entry-level MBA types of jobs. The former position categories are less constrained by supervision / monitoring, rules, and job-related procedures, and it was anticipated that applicant-organization fit would be more important for these types of jobs. In a second study, human resources professionals were found to rate applicant-job fit, applicant-organization fit, applicant-job focus and applicant-organization focus reliably in actual résumés. The results of the second study demonstrated the importance of impressions of applicant-job and applicant-organization fit in résumé screening decisions for an experienced technical support position, whereas in the third study, a résumé screening experiment with an entry-level university graduate job, actual applicant-organization fit influenced ratings of interview likelihood to a significant extent. Overall, the findings of these studies point to human resources professionals' beliefs in the importance of applicant-organization fit in hiring. At the résumé screening stage of hiring, the importance of actual applicant-job fit and actual applicant-organization fit in screening outcomes was strong, and such differences also led to differences in rated impressions of applicant-job fit and impressions of applicantorganization fit. Findings supported predictions of Schneider's (1987) ASA framework.

Keywords: Impression Formation

Person-Environment Fit Job Applicant Screening Personnel Selection

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research project would not have been possible without the encouragement, guidance, patience, and enthusiasm of my Chief Advisor, Dr. Mitch Rothstein of the Richard Ivey School of Business. In addition, I am grateful for the generous participation of the human resources professionals who took part in these studies, whose time and reflection was critical to the success of this project. In particular, the assistance and key participation of Julie Doran, Ruzena Andrysek, Nancy Neirinckx, Janet Horvath, and Christine Smulders is acknowledged and greatly appreciated. I also found the patient statistical advice of Dr. Robert Gardner invaluable. The financial and administrative support of Murray Axmith and Associates of London, Ontario, and its Managing Partner Dr. David Tucker, is gratefully acknowledged for the first study. In addition, I would like to acknowledge the help that Dr. Tucker's encouragement and interest in this thesis project has been for me. I wish to thank my father, the late Paul Ward, for encouraging me to pursue this degree and for sharing with me his passion for the world of work. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my husband Alex, my son Flormon, and my mother Dorothy Ward for their support, sacrifices, and encouragement for my efforts, and for their unwavering belief in me.

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#### **CHAPTER 1: Introduction**

Beginning sometime after the second human inhabited the earth, people have been concerned with the impression and impact they make on others, especially on those who control desired outcomes. Even in the animal kingdom, there are numerous examples of behaviors that serve to convey messages of dominance, strength, submission, courtship, etc. (Wimer & Wimer, 1985). Among homo sapiens, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, attitudes, motives, and personality traits often are relayed inaccurately in interactions with others (Jones, 1990). There are several reasons for inaccurate selfpresentations. One may attempt to disguise the true nature of such characteristics in order to obtain a favorable (albeit undeserved) outcome from an interaction, one may present oneself in a self-handicapping manner to protect one's ego from the attributional consequences of going all out yet failing to achieve one's goals in the interaction (Arkin & Shepperd, 1989), one may not be fully conscious of one's underlying traits, feelings, values, and attitudes, or one inadvertently may present oneself in a manner inconsistent with such inner aspects, unaware of the impact that certain words or behaviors have on others due to cultural differences or poorly developed social judgment processes. Because of the general unreliability and poor validity of another's self-presentation as a predictor of that person's true self, people are concerned with "seeing through" the selfpresentation of others in an attempt to evaluate their legitimate personal characteristics and motives (see Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Schlenker, 1980). In face-to-face interactions, verbal, paralinguistic, and nonverbal cues are used to predict these "inner" aspects in others. In written self-presentations, such cues may be more subtle, but they could

include writing style, content, visual presentation, and congruence with the audience's interests.

The importance of accurate impression formation of job applicants is apparent in employment selection. However, this goal is elusive. In the context of the employment interview, there is empirical evidence that nonverbal, paralinguistic, and substantive applicant self-presentation tactics influence interviewer judgments (N.R. Anderson & Shackleton, 1990; Baron, 1983, 1986, 1989; Fletcher, 1989, 1990; Forbes & Jackson, 1980; Gifford, Ng, & Wilkinson, 1985; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989a; Hollandsworth, Kazelskis, Stevens, & Dressel, 1979; Imada & Hakel, 1977; Kacmar, Delery, & Ferris, 1992; Parsons & Liden, 1984; Riggio & Throckmorton, 1988; Stevens & Kristof, 1995; Tessler & Sushelsky, 1978; Young & Beier, 1977). Interview validity is enhanced substantially by increased interview structure (at least to an asymptotic level), as indicated in meta-analyses by Huffcott and Arthur (1994), McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt, and Maurer (1994), Schmidt and Rader (1999), and Weisner and Cronshaw (1988) and in research by Campion, Pursell, and Brown (1988). It is likely that one of the effects of interview structure is a reduction in applicant control, limiting opportunities for the applicant to engage in both planned and spontaneous impression management tactics.

Whereas much selection research has concentrated on the interview, the most common initial self-presentation made by job applicants to an organization is written, consisting of a résumé and/or completed application form, with the former often accompanied by a "cover" letter of application (Heneman & Heneman, 1994; Levine & Flory, 1975). Levine and Flory (1975) contended that résumé or application form

evaluation is the most frequently used employment selection technique (but see also Arvey & Campion, 1982) and estimated that in the United States, over one billion résumés and job application forms were prepared by job seekers and screened by organizational representatives annually. That was over two decades ago, and the numbers presumably have increased since then. Although résumés may not be a major consideration in final selection decisions, they are used widely to screen out applicants from further consideration early in the selection process (Gatewood & Feild, 1990; Levine & Flory, 1975). In comparison to the employment interview, there is much less published research about impression management tactics in the résumé, and even less that is relevant to impression formation in résumé screening. Such academic study is important, as a recent article in the popular business press estimated that 10 - 30% of job applicants present distorted or false credentials on their résumés (Greengard, 1995). Rynes (1993) has discussed the likely prevalence of job applicant distortion and other impression management tactics in written and interview self-presentations, along with the potentially detrimental effects these tactics may have on selection validity. To date there have been a few studies on résumé style and its impact on résumé evaluation (Bird & Puglisi, 1986; Helwig, 1985; Ryland & Rosen, 1987). A few other studies have investigated the effect of résumé/application form content variations in credentials on reviewer evaluations (Gilmore & Ferris, 1989a; Rasmussen, 1984; Tessler & Sushelsky, 1978), and to date only one published study has addressed résumé content (biodata) influences on recruiter screening decisions (Brown & Campion, 1994). Further, as will be discussed in greater detail later in this paper, these published studies barely have

scratched the surface of the myriad of meaningful research questions for investigation into résumé screening. Although the screening of résumés is a widespread employment selection practice, perhaps even the most common one (as argued by Levine and Flory, 1975), it is an area that has received very little research attention.

At each stage of the selection process, study of the influences on selection outcomes is critically important from the perspective of the job applicant as well as that of the recruiter, hiring manager, and organization. In recent years the prevalence of global competition, corporate downsizing, restructuring, and enhancements to office and production technology have combined to displace large numbers of workers (see Cascio, 1995). Many, having occupied senior positions, now face a shrunken market for their skills in today's delayered organizations. Others find that their skills have become outdated in the face of increased technological sophistication or shifts in corporate culture. In addition, Cote and Allahar (1994) have outlined the difficulties that new labor market entrants face in obtaining desirable work opportunities in the late twentieth century. Whereas writers such as Offermann and Gowling (1993) predicted that employers face a looming skills shortage among job applicants, the current reality is that for many occupational categories that are not technology-intensive, the supply of labor in Europe and North America exceeds its demand (Gunter, Furnham, & Drakeley, 1993). This translates into more job applicants. More job applicants means more résumés and/or applications to screen on the recruiter's part, as well as increased competition at the first hurdle of the selection process for the applicant. Even in occupational categories that are in demand, applicants may want to increase their chances for selection for the most

desirable positions. It is important to displaced employees, to young people trying to enter the job market, to people competing for highly desirable positions, as well as to the various providers of services to people in such positions, to discern how a résumé gets the attention of and makes the best impression on a recruiter or hiring manager. At present, the bulk of what has been written on this subject exists in the popular press and tends to be anecdotal (e.g., Parker, 1989; Yate, 1994). As noted above, there is little guidance on this matter from the existing research literature.

From the perspective of organizations, the task of choosing among an expanded applicant pool to find candidates who will "fit" not only the job, but also their culture and evolving needs/strategies/goals, is becoming increasingly difficult (Gatewood & Feild, 1990). The stakes are higher for a downsized organization, as each newly hired employee can have a greater influence on productivity (Greller & Nee, 1989). In addition to the sheer volume of job seeker résumés that organizations now must screen in their search efforts for many job openings (Gunter et al., 1993), many candidates in the applicant pool have had formal coaching and training to hone their written and verbal self-presentation skills. Applicants may have had their résumés written (totally or in part), edited, or typeset for them by a professional career counseling, outplacement, or résumé service to enhance the impressions their résumés will make on employers. The impact of such assistance on selection validity has not been studied in the published research literature. Since the initial selection process is usually a résumé screening, this process is likely to result in the greatest variance reduction in the applicant pool of all the selection processes that may be employed in a given selection situation. Thus, its influence on selection

outcomes can be considerable. I/O psychologists have developed more reliable and valid interview methodologies (e.g., Feild & Gatewood, 1989; Janz, 1989; Latham, 1989; Schmidt & Rader, 1999), assessment measures (see Smith & George, 1994), work sample measures (see Muchinsky, 1986), realistic job previews (e.g., Wanous & Colella, 1989), and biodata measures (e.g., Gandy, Dye, & MacLane, 1994; Reilly & Chao, 1982; Stokes & Cooper, 1994) to help organizations identify the "substance" (relative strength of factors predictive of performance effectiveness and fit) and to "see through" impression management strategies unrelated to workplace success when screening and selecting employees. However, I am aware of only five published studies on the impact of résumé self-presentation on recruiter evaluations (Brown & Campion, 1994; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989a; Knouse et al., 1988; Rasmussen, 1984; Tessler & Sushelsky, 1978), even though résumé screening has been argued to be the most widely used selection tool (Levine & Flory, 1975). None of these studies involved consideration of the potential for applicantorganization fit as portrayed in the résumé and its importance in screening decisions, although organizational fit is an increasing concern for organizations (Arvey & Murphy, 1998; Borman, Hanson, & Hedge, 1997; Bowen, Ledford, & Nathan, 1996; Kristof, 1996). The preceding arguments indicate that résumé effects on pre-employment screening decisions should be of concern to organizations, particularly in terms of understanding the dynamics of their impact on impression formation by organizational representatives.

The importance of this conclusion was underscored by a field demonstration that recruiters' first impressions of an applicant, formed from a brief review of an application blank and test scores, were directly related to the level of positive and confirmatory interview behavior on the part of the recruiters in a subsequent interview (Dougherty, Turban, & Callender, 1994). These findings indicate that application and test score information may affect interview validity, in addition to their impact on application screening. First impressions of résumé content could affect selection validity in a similar fashion. In addition, Brown and Campion (1994) found that organizational recruiters use résumé biodata to infer personality traits as well as abilities and educational/experience qualifications. Thus the potential impact of impression formation in résumé screening can be far-reaching.

The existing research literature provides little guidance about the impact of résumé content and presentation on the screener's impressions of an applicant or on résumé screening decisions. There is some support for the importance of qualifications, style/format, and paper quality in résumé evaluation, but there are no published investigations of the impact of wording/language, argument, writing style, or relevance to the audience's interests (e.g., job-specific and organizational fit). Of particular interest for the present program of research is the impact of résumé content related to organizational concerns on résumé screening outcomes, in addition to the influence of content related to job-specific qualifications and fit. Person-organization fit has become a key concern for many organizations in their selection decisions (Borman et al., 1997; Bowen et al., 1996; Kristof, 1996), in part because of a new emphasis on organizational competencies as a key strategic issue for organizations, as companies shift from jobs to competencies as the basic unit of organizational analysis and selection (see Lawler, 1994). In addition,

organizational strategies increasingly are emphasizing key values (e.g., customer focus) and cultural considerations (e.g., team focus, flexibility). Performance criteria are being expanded to include organizationally relevant aspects contextual to task performance, such as organizational citizenship behaviors (Arvey & Murphy, 1998; Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). All else (e.g., job qualifications) being equivalent, as companies embrace such strategies, it is likely that résumés whose content is relevant to key organizational needs, issues, values, culture, goals, opportunities, rewards, and strategies will be evaluated more favorably than those without such organizational relevance. Such a prediction would also be made on the basis of Schneider's (1987; Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995) Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) framework.

In Schneider's ASA framework, a strong pull toward organizational homogeneity is considered to exist in workplaces, achieved through progressive restriction in the range of variation from the population of potential job applicants, to the actual applicant sample, to the sample selected by the organization, and finally to the sample left after the more dissimilar organizational members tend to leave the organizational ranks, of their own volition to seek/accept more compatible organizational cultures or as a result of organizational action. Résumé screening is a major step in this progressively restricted range of variability. At the heart of these processes are goals, according to Schneider, initially those of the organizational founder(s) and evolving to the current goals of the organization and its members. Therefore, Schneider's framework would predict that applicant focus on and explicitly stated compatibility with organizational goals, and on what the organization is perceived to need to achieve those goals, will result in more

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favorable selection outcomes. This model also predicts that individuals whose goals can be met by a particular kind of organization are more likely to be attracted to and selected by such an organization. In addition, compatibility between an individual's personality and a company's culture, and between an applicant's and a company's values, should improve one's screening success, according to the ASA framework. The importance of such applicant-organization congruence in goals-opportunities, personality-culture, and values is also addressed in Kristof's (1996) model of person-organization fit. This will be discussed in more detail later in this paper.

The continuum process model of impression formation proposed by Fiske and colleagues and the dual process model of Brewer hold that category confirmation impression formation processes predominate over attribute-by-attribute analysis, to the extent that the perceived attributes readily fit an available cognitive category (and provided that motivation for impression accuracy is not paramount; Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Leyens & Fiske, 1994). At the early stage of the selection process in which résumé screening initially occurs, the motivation for screening accuracy is likely to be less pronounced than in the final stages of selection. Whereas the consequences of résumé screening decisions can mean loss of an opportunity for an individual applicant, from an organizational perspective, résumé screening decisions, although necessary, have limited risk (provided that the applicant pool is sufficiently large). It would seem that motivation for impression accuracy is likely to be of less importance than efficiency of the process, and therefore category confirmation would be the impression formation process used predominantly in résumé screening, according to the Brewer and Fiske and

Neuberg models. Thus, given equivalent qualifications, presentation of résumé content in a way that makes confirmation of an organizationally desired category more likely should be predictive of a more favorable screening decision. For example, an organization may value effective team skills because of a strategy to use multidisciplinary project teams extensively. In this example, résumé content that reflects team orientation would be expected to improve screening outcomes by increasing the probability of "team orientation" category confirmation, and therefore also the likelihood of a favorable screening decision. Another organization may have a need for employees who can work independently because of factors such as geographic dispersion of the workforce (e.g. telecommuting/work-at-home settings, geographic isolation of consulting or sales staff, branch network or multinational structure). In such situations, résumé content that emphasizes or indicates success in independent work should increase instances of confirmation of a "can work independently" cognitive category. Whereas such characteristics may be needed to perform a given job the way it is supposed to be performed in a given organization, they may not be required to perform that job as it is performed in other organizations, making such characteristics indicative of organizational fit rather than job-specific fit (see Kristof, 1996). Categories likely to be important in impression formation of job applicants include congruence between applicant goals and organizational opportunities, between applicant and organizational values, and between applicant personality and the organizational culture, according to Schneider's ASA framework. These categories are addressed in Kristof's (1996) model of personorganization fit as well.

The major thesis of the present investigations is that résumé content indicative of organizational fit concerns, as well as concerns for job-specific qualifications/fit, will predict favorable résumé screening outcomes at the hands of organizational representatives involved in selection. The proposed mechanism of the predicted P-O fit phenomena, in accordance with Schneider's ASA framework and supported by Kristof's model of P-O fit, is that résumé biodata that signals congruence with organizational culture, values, industry, and opportunities will lead to more favorable applicant impressions in résumé screening. P-J fit is predicted to be important due to its traditional importance in employee selection (see Borman et al., 1997). Applicant focus on jobrelevant and organizationally-relevant biodata is also likely to influence résumé screening success. This would be due to the greater likelihood of confirming cognitive categories relevant to an "ideal" candidate prototype.

The primary framework upon which this thesis is based is depicted in Figure 1. A distinction between potential for job/organizational fit and job/organizational focus in résumé presentation may be noted in Figure 1. An applicant may focus on aspects relevant to job or organizational fit considerations, yet present résumé evidence of such fit that is not convincing to the résumé screener. In another case, an applicant actually may have high potential for fit with an organization's culture, values, and opportunities, yet not focus on such fit aspects, presenting his/her background and goals in a more general rather than organizationally-specific manner. Thus, such a distinction seems warranted.

Résumé self-presentation $\Rightarrow$	Hiring representative $\Rightarrow$ impression formation	Résumé screening outcome
<ul> <li>Evidence of Applicant- Job Fit</li> <li>Applicant-Job Focus</li> <li>Evidence of Applicant- Organization Fit</li> <li>Applicant-Organization Focus</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Potential for Job- Specific Fit</li> <li>Potential for Organizational Fit</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Continue to consider for selection</li> <li>Cease to consider for selection</li> </ul>

Figure 1. Framework for the program of research.

Résumé evidence of applicant-job and applicant-organization fit, as well as applicant selfpresentation focus on job fit and organizational fit categories, are proposed to influence the impressions that résumé screeners form of an applicant's potential for fit on these two dimensions. These impressions, in turn, are predicted to influence résumé screening outcomes (continue to consider for selection / cease to consider for selection).

The nature of impression formation will be examined next, followed by a review of the existing literature on the relationship between résumé presentation and the impressions formed by the résumé evaluator, including screening-relevant outcomes that follow such evaluation. Résumé screening involves impression formation processes. Consequently, the present research program is informed by impression formation theory, although it does not test predictions of this body of theory. The following theoretical discussion is designed to establish that people do form impressions, and that these are used in decision making.

#### Impression formation: The conceptual domain

To understand the ways in which applicant self-presentation can impact a recruiter's judgment, it is important to consider the processes involved in impression formation. Social cognition theorists tend to group into schema-driven/category-based processing (following from the legacy of Asch) or attribute-driven/person-based processing camps, in accordance with the theoretical perspectives of Anderson (Leyens & Fiske, 1994). However, dual process theories (or in the Fiske et al. theory, a continuum model with the two processes as poles) have emerged more recently, proposing contextual and goal-driven predictors of which of these two processes will predominate

(e.g., Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Kunda & Thagard, 1996; Leyens & Fiske, 1994). Although these impression formation theories were developed to deal with stereotypical social-cognitive categories (e.g., those related to gender) and impression formation processes, spreading activation network theories (e.g., J.R. Anderson, 1983) and semantic hierarchy theories of information processing (e.g., R.C. Anderson, 1978) would support the argument that prototypical categories would work in a similar fashion to stereotypical categories.

Fiske and her colleagues (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Leyens & Fiske, 1994) acknowledged that both categorical and assimilation-of-individuating-attributes processes are used in impression formation, but proposed that there is a continuum rather than a clear distinction between the two types of processes. Category-based impression formation has primacy over individuating attribute-focused processes. The latter require more attentional resources. Schemas, on the other hand, are the templates for categorical processing. They allow pattern- or profile-based processes to guide impression formation, requiring less attention and resulting in more automatic and efficient cognitive processing. Available information and the perceiver's motivation affect the extent to which impression formation proceeds primarily by categorization or by integration of perceptions of individual attributes. To the degree that available information readily fits into a category that the perceiver has available, category confirmation occurs. When there is a partial fit, category confirmation or recategorization may occur. When the agent's perceived attributes do not constitute a reasonable fit to an available category, attributeby-attribute analysis is likely to take place (to the extent that the perceiver is motivated by

a desire for accuracy to do so). The perceiver's motivation to be accurate in his or her impression of the agent determines whether categorical or attribute-based processing will predominate; a higher motivation for accurate perception will increase the likelihood that the perceiver will integrate perceptions of individual attributes in forming an impression of the agent.

Brewer's (1988) dual process model, on the other hand, contends that *either* categorical or individuating processes are used by a perceiver when an impression is formed. Brewer does agree with Fiske and her colleagues that a categorical process will be used if the motivation for accuracy is not sufficiently high.

Kunda and Thagard (1996), like Fiske and her colleagues and Brewer, propose that both categorical (called stereotyping in their framework) and individuating processes are used in impression formation. However, Kunda and Thagard contend that the two types of processes are both used in impression formation, with impression formation guided by spreading activation through a network of cognitive nodes of information about stereotypes (cognitive categories), traits, and behaviors. Their theory also differs from those of Fiske et al. and Brewer in that Kunda and Thagard do not regard categorical impression formation as the primary impression formation process.

These three latter impression formation theories agree that categorical impression formation is used extensively when people form impressions of others. Brewer and Fiske and her colleagues regard categorical impression formation as the predominant impression formation process, whereas Kunda and Thagard do not acknowledge the dominance of categorically-based impression formation.

In personnel selection, motivation for accurate person perception is likely to be high overall. It is also likely to be higher for positions that have a greater impact on the organization (e.g., managers and professionals, as opposed to support or entry-level roles). However, early in the selection process when résumé screening initially occurs, there is more variability in the applicant pool and less need for fine distinctions among applicants, even for roles that have greater potential for organizational impact. According to the Brewer and the Fiske et al. theories of impression formation, recruiters would engage in more category-based impression formation at this point and increasingly in attribute-based impression formation in the latter stages of the selection process. In addition, the outcome consequences for the organization are less important in résumé screening, as other evaluations of the surviving applicants will occur before a final selection decision is made. From the organization's perspective, the risk of false negatives (inappropriately screened-out applicants) is tolerable as long as there is an appropriately large pool of applicants with the required qualifications or provided that screening decisions can be reconsidered. With sufficient numbers of qualified applicants, therefore, category-based impression formation would be more likely to be used by recruiters in forming impressions of applicants in résumé screening, according to this extension of the Fiske and Neuberg (1990) and Brewer models. Many authors have predicted a looming skills shortage, at least in North America (Johnston, 1992; Offermann & Gowling, 1993). Given selection situations in which there are small applicant pools and difficulty in finding requisite skills and/or organizationally desired characteristics (values, personality, goals), it is conceivable that attribute-based

impression formation may become more prevalent. However, an oversupply of labor in a given field or labor market (see Gunter et al., 1993) makes such a situation less likely. In addition, whenever a recruiter/interviewer encounters a clearly unsuitable applicant, impression formation would be likely to proceed on a categorical basis. Given the proposed likelihood of categorical processing in résumé screening and the more limited information processing that is involved in categorical processing (as opposed to the less efficient attribute-by-attribute processing), applicant-organization focus and applicant-job focus should be important considerations for applicants attempting to be categorized as suitable candidates by recruiters.

Additional support for the above arguments comes from research demonstrating that employment recruiters/interviewers hold an image, prototype, or implicit personality theory of an ideal candidate (e.g., Motowidlo, 1986; Jackson, Chan, & Stricker, 1979; Rothstein & Jackson, 1980; Rowe, 1989), which could be considered as a schema or category. That such a category-based applicant screening process is involved in employment selection evaluation has received empirical support from Rothstein and Jackson (1980) and Jackson, Peacock, and Smith (1980). Fiske and colleagues (Fiske & Neuberg, 1989; Leyens & Fiske, 1994), as well as Brewer (1988), as discussed above, indicate that impression formation will proceed by category confirmation to the extent that information available to the perceiver fits an accessible category and if motivation for accuracy is not sufficiently strong. Therefore, applicant-job and applicant-organization focus in job applicant self-presentation may function to maximize the applicant's odds of sufficient category confirmation to achieve a "meets qualifications" or "good fit" evaluation on the part of the recruiter.

A theoretical perspective that would predict the importance of applicantorganization congruence (fit), Benjamin Schneider's Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) framework (1983, 1987; Schneider et al., 1995), has significant implications for impression formation by organizational representatives in the employee selection process. This framework would predict that applicant-organization congruence or fit will result in more favorable impression formation by organizational recruiters, all else being equal. Schneider comes from the interactionist camp of personality theorists, and a key contention in his model is that organizational environments are a function of the types of persons who predominate in the organization (rather than the reverse, as situational theorists contend).

The ASA cycle functions to promote homogeneity among organizational members and restrict variation. The types of people attracted to a given organization will be more similar to each other than they will be to job applicants in general. This contention is based on a robust finding in vocational psychology, that people are drawn to different careers based on the pattern of their interests and personality characteristics, as well as on Holland's (1976) views that career environments can be categorized, that environments are shaped by the types of people predominant in them, and that people choose jobs based on compatibility between their "type" or profile (interest/personality characteristics pattern) and the type of environment in which the job is performed. Thus, there is a restriction in range of variation among applicants to a particular organization when compared to the universe of job applicants, as certain kinds of people are more likely to apply to certain types of organizations. Further, the type of people selected by an organization will be even more homogeneous than the applicant sample because organizations will tend to select employees who are deemed to "fit" the organization, which is influenced by the extent to which an applicant is perceived to possess values, goals, personality traits and behavioral proclivities that predominate among other members of the organizational environment. Finally, those employees who do not seem to "fit" the organization will tend to leave, either of their own accord or as a result of organizational action. Schneider (1987) summarized his model as follows:

At the hub of the framework is goals. It is important to remember that goals here are in the head of the founder [of the organization], becoming manifest through his or her behavior. Thus organizational goals become operationalized via behavior, and that behavior, in turn, yields structures and processes. These manifestations of goals determine the kinds of people who are attracted to, are selected by, and stay with a particular organization. Over time, persons attracted to, selected by, staying with, and behaving in organizations cause them to be what they are (pp. 444-445).

One of the implications of Schneider's framework is that job applicant selfpresentation focus on his or her fit with an organization is likely to pay off for the applicant, to the extent that such focus is based on a good understanding of the organization and its members. Applicant focus on aspects of organizational fit in résumé presentations would serve to highlight the applicant's similarities to current organizational members and fit with organizational culture, applicant-organization value congruence, and the applicant's competencies that are relevant to organizational needs and future directions. Thus, applicant research on a target organization should be beneficial, provided that the knowledge gained from the research is translated into appropriately focused job applicant self-presentation. Schneider's framework predicts that applicant focus on fit with organizational goals, values, and culture will be particularly effective. These organizational features tend to be particularly sensitive to the kinds of people leading and working in the organization, according to Schneider, although he contends that all organizational features, even structural ones, are dependent on the types of people who predominate in the organization. Therefore, the categories important in impression formation of job applicants include those relevant to applicant personality, values, goals, and abilities to achieve organizational goals, according to the ASA framework.

Organizational concern with person-organization (P-O) fit has become increasingly prevalent in the past several years (see Arvey & Murphy, 1998; Borman et al., 1997; Bowen et al., 1996; Kristof, 1996), and this concern provides another reason why an applicant's emphasis on his or her fit with organizational goals, needs, values, culture, and climate should pay off for the applicant. Kristof underscores a contention by Ferris and Judge (1991), that applicant impression management tactics can enhance perceptions of person-organization fit and thereby influence selection outcomes. To the extent that such self-presentation is inaccurate, the actual P-O fit is likely to be lower (Kristof, 1996). However, Kristof goes as far as to hypothesize that *any* applicant impression management tactics will be associated with lower levels of actual P-O fit upon hire. But applicant-organization focus is an impression management tactic that need not involve false self-presentation; it could reflect instead a focused emphasis on the applicant's features that demonstrate P-O fit. Although Kristof's hypothesis has not been tested, the present author contends that strategic self-presentational focus would be unrelated to lower levels of actual P-O fit. The research program in the present paper does not address self-presentation accuracy. However, Kristof and Ferris and Judge did assert that impression management tactics can influence selection outcomes by increasing perceptions of P-O fit. The present research did address the relationship between the impression management tactic of including biodata indicative of person-organization fit in the résumé and its influence on selection-relevant outcomes.

The preceding analysis of impression formation and person-organization fit frameworks points to the theoretical relevance of recruiter impressions of applicantorganization fit for résumé screening outcomes. Given the early stage of the selection process at which résumé screening occurs, current theories of impression formation by Fiske et al. (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Leyens & Fiske, 1994) and by Brewer (1988) would predict that category-based impression formation processes will predominate. Schneider's ASA framework (1987: Schneider et al., 1995) would predict that these categories are likely to include categories related to the "personality" or culture of the organization and its members, related to the goals of the organization, and related to the values of the organization, its founder, and its members.

Schneider's model seems especially suited to analysis of P-O fit issues in employee selection for several reasons. First, the selection process is central to the ASA framework. Secondly, it predicts important aspects of P-O fit in *selection decisions*, whereas other models of P-O fit tend to focus on post-hire congruence (e.g., Chatman, 1991). The analysis of the impression formation theories discussed above merely indicates that impression formation in résumé screening is likely to be category-based but does not predict which categories will be important in such impressions. Finally, Kristof's integrative model of P-O fit shows that the ASA framework has been the primary conceptual model that has dealt with employee selection. Thus, the ASA model is a primary theoretical focus for the present program of research.

Given that the present research program uses résumés as the vehicle through which to study impression formation, the pertinent empirical literature on résumé selfpresentation now will be examined, along with selected findings from interview selfpresentation investigations that are relevant to the present program of research. Where possible, findings related to the impact of impressions of applicant-job fit and of applicant-organization fit considerations on employment screening/selection decisions (outcomes) will be stressed, as this is a main focus of the current research program. However, as noted above, such research is limited.

### Empirical evidence pertaining to what makes for a successful résumé

Style. Stylistic applicant self-presentation behaviors in a résumé could include graphics, layout, format, font, paper color and quality. There have been a few studies of the impact of stylistic presentational aspects in résumés. Ryland and Rosen (1987) investigated the effect of chronological and functional résumé format on personnel professionals' ratings of male and female applicants who were seeking a promotion in their field, a transfer to a different career field, or reentry into the job market. They found that the functional résumé was rated more favorably overall. Follow up tests indicated that male applicants using a functional résumé format were rated more favorably than those using a chronological format, whereas there was no difference in ratings of female applicants using chronological versus functional formats. Functional résumés often are presented in a manner that is more focused on the applicant's career goals or on the position sought. They frequently are designed to be more generally persuasive and less detailed (e.g., accomplishments may be claimed without reference to what level of responsibility or type of position one occupied when the accomplishment was realized). These results indicate that such a persuasive résumé format is advantageous for men but not for women, possibly because work-related self-promotion is either more believable for men or more consistent with gender-related role expectations.

Bird and Puglisi (1986) investigated résumé evaluations by human resource professionals and students. Seven résumés were either professionally typeset and printed on tan paper, typed and printed on high quality white paper, photocopied in a high quality fashion (on photocopy paper), or poorly photocopied (on photocopy paper). Whereas the students and professionals did not differ significantly in their ratings overall, a résumé x rater group interaction indicated that the professionals rated the poor quality photocopy as significantly worse and the typed and printed/white paper résumé as significantly better than the others; students did not demonstrate such differentiation in their ratings. These results support contentions about the importance of résumé style to professional recruiters. They also underscore the importance of conducting selection research with professionals rather than undergraduate students in recruiter, interviewer, or hiring manager roles. It remains to be determined if such résumé style differences would result in different selection-relevant outcomes (e.g., invitation for interview), as opposed to the global résumé ratings that were obtained in this study.

Helwig (1985) asked corporate recruiters to rate each of three résumés differing in format (traditional style, qualification brief, narrative style) on nine 5-point scales: identifying information, objective, education, work experience, personal data, references, organization, attractiveness, overall rating. The traditional résumé was rated significantly higher on each of the scales, with the exception of the "objective" scale, on which there was no difference in ratings among the three résumé styles. In addition, the qualifications brief was preferred to the narrative résumé style on six of the scales: work experience, personal data, references, organization, attractiveness, and overall rating. As was the case in Bird and Puglisi's (1986) research, recruiters were not asked to rate whether applicants portrayed in the various résumé formats would be considered differentially in screening outcomes. A major design problem with this study is that content, length, graphical style, and writing style differences were confounded with résumé format differences. Thus, the results of this study are difficult to interpret, as three résumés differing on a number of format, stylistic, and content variables were used. Ryland and Rosen (1987), on the other hand (see above), used identical content in their chronological and functional résumé formats, although content was located in different places as appropriate for each résumé style.

In summary, the impact of applicant nonverbal and paralinguistic style has been investigated extensively in the interview, with relatively consistent demonstrations of influence on interview evaluations. In particular, smiling, eye contact, direct and forward-leaning orientation of one's torso with respect to the interviewer, speech fluency, and facial, vocal and gestural expressiveness have been shown to be related to positive interview evaluations. On the other hand, very little investigation has been conducted into the impact of résumé style. Résumé style research has demonstrated that format, print, and paper quality have a direct relationship with résumé evaluations. To date, however, there is no published research relevant to this issue that included résumé screening decision measures.

Substance. There has been less research on the content of applicant selfpresentation in selection contexts. The relevant research that does exist includes only six studies in which a main focus was résumé self-presentation or content that could be indicative of job fit (Brown & Campion, 1994; Culwell-Block & Sellers, 1994; Hakel, Dobmeyer, & Dunnette, 1970; Hutchinson, 1984; Spinks & Wells, 1987; Wells, Spinks, & Hargrave, 1981). Other studies focusing on the interview have manipulated résumé credentials or biodata, along with an investigation of the impact of types of content in answers to interview questions, with applicant and hirability evaluations as outcome measures (Gilmore & Ferris, 1989a; Rasmussen, 1984; Tessler & Sushelsky, 1978). Some of this research involved manipulation of stylistic as well as substantive aspects of the self-presentations. This research on job applicant written and interview selfpresentation content can be divided into three general categories: 1) studies relevant to the impact of presented applicant qualifications, (2) studies relevant to recruiter preferences for résumé content, and (3) one study that assessed recruiter phenomenology of résumé content (biodata). It should become clear to the reader that there is a strong need for more research on résumé screening.

Studies of the impact of job applicant self-presentation related to P-J fit. One study involved variations in résumé credentials (applicant qualifications) as well as applicant impression management behavior in interview statements. Thus this study, although focused on the interview, is relevant to the impact of both interview and résumé content. Gilmore and Ferris (1989a) did not find a main effect for applicant résumé credentials in MANCOVA analysis of ratings (hiring likelihood, recommended starting salary, applicant qualifications, applicant interview performance, adequacy of applicant information, and subject-rater's confidence in ratings accuracy) of a videotaped applicant with good versus poor academic and experience qualifications for a Customer Service Representative position (using rater scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale as a covariate). They also included ingratiating applicant impression management statements (giving the interviewer a compliment for asking good questions and telling the interviewer that the applicant would like to work for a good manager like the interviewer) in a composite of impression management behaviors that also involved eye contact and smiling nonverbal behaviors. There was a positive effect for higher levels of this impression management composite on ratings of interview performance and a trend toward a positive effect on hiring recommendations (p < .07), contrary to the findings of Knouse et al. Although Gilmore and Ferris did not find a significant multivariate effect for applicant résumé credentials on ratings in the MANCOVA, a manipulation check indicated that applicants with better résumé credentials received higher qualifications ratings. It should be noted

that this study included an applicant credentials manipulation more subtle than that used in the two other employment selection studies involving a manipulation of this dimension (Rasmussen, 1984; Tessler & Sushelsky, 1978), as discussed below. In Gilmore and Ferris' research, both applicants were university students and both had three years of parttime work experience; they differed in the relevance of their university major, their grade point average, and the relevance of their part-time experience.] Thus, Gilmore and Ferris demonstrated that ingratiating interview content coupled with positive nonverbal behavior had a significant impact on evaluation of an applicant's interview performance and produced a trend toward more positive hiring recommendations, whereas relatively small differences in job-related résumé credentials did not result in significant differences in hiring evaluations.

Rasmussen (1984) included two substantive variables and one stylistic variable in his study of content in a simulated, videotaped interview: résumé credentials, answer relevance to interview questions, and a nonverbal behavior composite. Like Gilmore and Ferris (1989a), this study, although performed in an interview setting, is relevant to both interview and résumé presentations because of the inclusion of a résumé credentials manipulation. He found that better résumé credentials and more relevant interview answers resulted in more favorable ratings of applicant qualifications. Applicants with a high level of positive nonverbal behavior in the relevant answer condition received higher ratings than those with a low level of the nonverbal behavior, whereas the opposite was true for applicants in the nonrelevant answer condition. Although substance was important for ratings of applicant qualifications whereas stylistic behavior was not, as

discussed in the previous section, résumé credentials and interview answer relevance were employed at only two markedly different levels, high and low. It would have been surprising if the qualifications ratings task had produced different results, even for the inexperienced undergraduate student/raters employed in this study. The answer relevance condition in Rasmussen's research could be considered a qualifications-related dimension (because it involved answer relevance to interview questions and not to organizational goals/culture/values), and the nonverbal behavior manipulation was a stylistic impression management manipulation. These two conditions interacted in Rasmussen's findings, with the higher caliber candidate receiving a higher rating when exhibiting positive nonverbal impression management behaviors and the lower caliber candidate receiving a lower rating when exhibiting positive nonverbal impression management behaviors. This indicates that higher caliber job applicants may be able to pull off impression management tactics more effectively (and perhaps more credibly) than lower caliber applicants. On the other hand, a qualifications x impression management interaction was not found by Gilmore and Ferris (1989a) with a more subtle qualifications manipulation and a verbal/nonverbal composite impression management manipulation. The present studies allowed examination of such an interaction effect of focus on job-specific fit (qualifications) and focus on the hiring organization. Applicant focus on how one fits the organization may interact with job fit, similar to the interaction found by Rasmussen, or it may increase the probability of a favorable screening/selection decision at all values of the qualifications spectrum, similar to the manipulation check findings by Gilmore and Ferris.

Tessler and Sushelsky's (1978) interview study included a "social status" manipulation that involved different qualifications-relevant information (university v. high school education, former officer v. nonofficer draftee status in the U.S. Army, steady record of work and promotion at one company versus a variety of previous low-status positions with different employers, higher salary history with greater percentage of increase over employment history, caliber of individuals used as reference sources). The second factor included in their study was level of eye contact, presented at three levels. Eye contact is a stylistic impression management manipulation. Each applicant was rated on potential effectiveness in a white collar and in a blue collar role. The "high status" applicant was rated as significantly more likely to be effective in the white collar position, less likely to be effective in the blue collar position, and less likely to be satisfied in the blue collar position. There was no effect of eye contact level, and the interactions between the two independent variables were not significant in ANOVAs on potential effectiveness ratings for each position. Although the difference between the "high status" and "low status" applicant in Tessler and Sushelsky's study was not quite as extreme as that in Rasmussen (1984), as can be seen above, qualifications differences were pronounced, which may have increased the salience of the substantive "status" manipulation to the point that the impact of eye contact was marginal. As eye contact is a stylistic impression management manipulation, Tessler and Sushelsky's failure to find a eye contact x status (credentials) interaction could be considered to be at odds with the results of the Rasmussen study.

Three studies reviewed above involved experimental manipulation of résumé or application content in the form of variations in job qualifications (job-specific fit and general employability) and/or impression management tactics. Rasmussen (1984) found that higher levels of applicant credentials resulted in higher ratings of applicant qualifications, and that relevant answers to interview questions (which could be considered qualifications-related) also increased applicant qualifications ratings and interacted with a composite nonverbal behavior manipulation (a stylistic impression management tactic). In the latter interaction, qualifications ratings were higher for applicants who engaged in "positive" nonverbal behavior and gave relevant answers to interview questions, whereas they were lower for those who emitted such positive nonverbal behavior but gave nonrelevant answers to interview questions. This latter finding indicates that impression management tactics, at least of the stylistic nonverbal variety, may produce the desired effect for high quality applicants but not for low quality applicants. Although credibility judgments were not involved in this study, it could be that low quality applicants were seen as less believable when engaging in nonverbal impression management tactics, whereas this was not the case for higher caliber applicants. Such a conjecture is tenuous and deserving of further investigation, as such a qualifications x impression management interaction was not obtained for résumé credentials in Rasmussen's study, nor in the results obtained by Gilmore and Ferris (1989a) or Tessler and Sushelsky (1978). This could be due to the more straightforward nature of rating applicant qualifications on the basis of objective credentials in Rasmussen's research, the more limited impression management manipulations (eye

contact only) utilized by Tessler and Sushelsky (1978), and the more subtle qualifications manipulation in Gilmore and Ferris (1989a). In a similar vein, it would be interesting to see if such an impression management x credentials interaction would be obtained for substantive rather than stylistic impression management tactics.

Recruiter preferences for content in written applicant self-presentation. Five published studies are relevant to recruiter preferences for content in written applicant selfpresentations. In the first, Hakel, Dobmeyer, and Dunnette (1970) asked professional recruiters and undergraduate students to rate overall hiring suitability of the applicant presented in each of 24 résumés that varied in scholastic standing (high, average, low), work experience (high/relevant, low/nonrelevant), and interests (Strong Vocational Interest Blank interests matching or not matching those of the profession in questionaccountants). Each independent variable (scholastic standing, relevance of work experience, and relevance of interests) had a significant positive impact on hiring suitability ratings by the professional recruiters. Scholastic standing x interest and experience x interest interactions were also obtained, showing that having relevant interests enhanced the positive influence of higher scholastic standing and more relevant work experience. Such results support Schneider's ASA framework, as relevance of interests (which may be more indicative of organization-specific than job-specific fit) augmented the positive effects of job-specific qualifications. Scholastic standing accounted for 47% of the variance in the overall hiring suitability ratings, whereas business experience and interests accounted for 2.5% and 1% respectively. Results for student ratings were similar in terms of main effects, but interactions between scholastic

standing and experience and between experience and alternate résumé forms were obtained. The high level of importance placed upon applicant scholastic standing can be explained by the facts that the target position was entry-level accountant, and that all résumés were from fourth-year accounting students. This ordering of factors in terms of their levels of influence (but not the magnitude of the difference) also would be expected for more senior positions. However, business experience should take on greater salience and other indices of fit, especially those indicative of applicant-organization fit such as relevance of interests, should be more important at higher organizational levels where one's impact on the organization may be more noticeable. Hakel et al.'s findings provide some basic data on important résumé aspects for college recruiting. However, this study does not address core content that could be relevant to assessments of applicantorganization fit, only peripheral aspects such as applicant interests and core content related to overall job qualifications rather than organizational fit. In addition, nearly three decades have elapsed since its publication. Organizational preferences for résumé content are likely to have changed to match the challenges of more participatory organizational structures, globalization of the business marketplace, increased competition, oversupply of labor in some fields and undersupply in others, enhancements to the technological milieu of the workplace, and increased customer demands for service and quality. Updated research may provide new insights.

In the second study on preferred résumé content, Culwell-Block and Sellers (1994) reviewed résumé content recommendations in nine current business communication textbooks. They found that the majority of texts recommended personal identification, education (college major, degree received, graduation date, college name), academic achievement (scholarships, GPA if good), work experience (job titles, employing company, employment dates, and duties), and initiative (personal financing of education) information. Accuracy and an appealing format were stressed by each text; the latter is a stylistic aspect. It is interesting to note that a job or career objective was recommended as essential or optional by only a minority of the texts; this is contrary to Hutchinson's (1984) findings about the preferences of Fortune 500 personnel administrators, as discussed next.

In contrast to the advice in the textbooks surveyed by Culwell-Block and Sellers (1994), Hutchinson (1984) surveyed personnel administrators from Fortune 500 companies and found that the vast majority preferred that résumés include a professional objective. Preferred content by a strong majority of the personnel professionals also involved educational qualifications (educational institution, degree, major, date of graduation and scholarships/awards/honors), previous work experience (positions held, employment dates), special aptitudes (e.g., keyboarding, language, computer skills), special work-related interests, and personal identification information. Content items preferred by a small minority of the personnel professionals included high school attended, reasons for leaving a job, name of supervisor, personal demographic and health information (date of birth, physical/health status, marital status, number of dependents), and references (as part of the résumé). Most of the content preference categories relate to job-specific qualifications, although the professional objective is indicative of applicant goals. This would be an important category for consideration of applicant-organization fit, according to the ASA model.

In the fourth of the résumé content preference studies, Spinks and Wells (1987) surveyed chief personnel officers in the 500 largest corporations in the U.S. to determine preferences for method of contact, cover letters, and résumé content. The majority of personnel officers preferred that initial contact for application to the company be in writing and neat in appearance, include both a typed cover letter and a typed résumé, that the résumé be one page in length (two at most), and contain a career/job objective, educational qualifications, previous work experiences, military service, willingness to relocate, scholarships/awards/honors, and special aptitudes. This study updated results from an earlier effort (Wells, Spinks, & Hargrave, 1981), and also provided further evidence for the importance of a job/career objective in a résumé, contrary to the advice given by the authors of the business communication texts in the study by Culwell-Block and Sellers (1994). The importance of an appropriate job/career objective would be predicted by the ASA framework.

A fifth study conducted by Ugbah and Evuleocha (1992) was based on the selfreports of corporate interviewers on what leads to success in on-campus interviews. Whereas the focus was on preferred applicant behaviors in the interview, aspects of their findings may provide clues with respect to preferred résumé content. They surveyed corporate interviewers involved in hiring graduating college students to determine the nature of applicant behaviors that lead to a successful interview outcome for the applicant. These were factor analyzed into six factors, accounting for a total of 52.4% of the variance in the behavior data. The first factor accounted for 25% of the variance and was labeled resourcefulness by the authors, with high factor loadings for leadership ability, initiative, goals, organizational skills, creativity, decisiveness, and flexibility on issues. The other factors and the variance each accounted for were: written credentials (with loadings by résumé, application letter, follow-up letter, work experience and level of education), 6.8%, support for arguments, 6.5%, social attributes (attitude, motivation, personality), 5.7%, comportment, 4.5%, and style (euphemisms, assertiveness, use of transitions), 3.9%. Thus, in the findings of this study, perceived traits related to resourcefulness (a substantive factor) were considerably more important than written credentials, argument support, comportment (a stylistic consideration), and other style factors. Resourcefulness may have been a specific organization-level need for the organizations whose recruiters were polled in this study, whereas written credentials of the type examined in this study would relate more to job-specific fit.

The above research on preferred résumé content underscores the importance of a job and/or career objective, information about education, experience, and special skills/aptitudes in the résumé, as well as a relative nonpreference for high school, social, and reference information. However, these are broad categories. Variations within each category of content could be virtually endless. Clearly, it is important to gather information about the effects of such variations. In addition, the most recent of the three studies that surveyed recruiter preferences was published twelve years ago, and a survey of human resource preferences seems warranted. Finally, a study in which human resource recruiters or hiring managers are asked to rate specific applicants portrayed in

résumés that vary in their inclusion of organizationally relevant and other types of information would be helpful in determining the actual extent to which such information improves an applicant's chances of screening success, heeding Graves and Karren's (1992) finding that self-reports are can be flawed as indicators of how selection criteria are actually applied. Such a study would utilize an experimental task similar to the résumé screening task employed by Hakel et al. (1970), but examine the effects of other kinds of content variability. The Brown and Campion (1994) investigation of the meaning of résumé biodata to organizational recruiters and its role in résumé screening is relevant to this latter type of inquiry. As discussed next, they demonstrated that recruiters discriminate among résumé biodata in screening evaluations. However, their research did not address the effect of organizationally relevant biodata. In addition to focus in a résumé statement of job/career objective or profile, it would be interesting to examine the effects of including biodata in the body of the résumé that varies in its congruence with job-specific and organization-specific fit considerations.

Recruiter phenomenology of résumé content. The Brown and Campion (1994) study examined the effects of résumé content (biodata statements) on recruiter impressions of the applicant. They found that company recruiters regarded biodata as indicative of ability as well as personality attributes, distinguished among ability-relevant biodata on the basis of whether it was more relevant to math or language skills, and discriminated among résumés containing biodata that signaled high versus low levels of interpersonal abilities. Recruiters also rated applicants differentially for jobs (sales versus cost accounting) calling for high versus low levels of these ability and personality (interpersonal skills) traits as a result of varying levels of relevant biodata in the résumés. Further, Brown and Campion found that recruiters were reasonably reliable in their evaluations of résumé biodata (reliability coefficients of .62 to .72 for evaluations of applicant language, math, physical, leadership and interpersonal abilities, although only .26 for ratings of applicant motivation), as did Levine and Flory (1975) two decades earlier. Thus it appears from Brown and Campion's research that recruiters do form impressions of applicants based on résumé content. In addition, it should be noted that recruiter impressions tended to go beyond the information presented in the biodata items–for example, biodata concerning community activities was judged to be indicative of significantly higher levels of interpersonal skills.

Summary of the effects of stylistic and substantive variation in job applicant interview and résumé presentations. In the résumé, résumé and interview, and interview-only studies reviewed above that involved both substantive and stylistic manipulations, each substantive applicant variable (résumé qualifications, verbal errors/negative and inappropriate interview content, positive interview statements, appropriateness of verbal content, and a composite of verbal content and nonverbal interview self-presentation) demonstrated a strong and statistically significant relationship with interviewer/rater judgments, with the exception of the qualifications manipulation in the Gilmore and Ferris (1989a) study. However, this latter study included a more subtle qualifications manipulation than the other studies (Rasmussen, 1984; Tessler & Sushelsky, 1978). Gilmore and Ferris did find that applicant credentials had a significant effect on ratings of applicant qualifications in a manipulation check. Each of the three other studies involving substantive and stylistic manipulations found a stronger effect for substantive factors than for stylistic factors (Rasmussen, 1984; Tessler & Sushelsky, 1978; Ugbah & Evuleocha, 1992).

In summary, the content of job applicant résumés and qualifications-relevant interview responses have been shown to influence recruiter evaluations of the applicant. However, the range of content that has been studied has been limited to levels of jobrelevant qualifications and applicant interests. Résumé content (biodata) has been shown to yield recruiter inferences of applicant personality characteristics as well as abilities (Brown & Campion, 1994). Such characteristics sometimes reflected inferences that went substantially beyond the information contained in the biodata statements.

A synopsis of what research findings have said about the features of an effective résumé indicates that appealing presentation (paper and print quality–Bird & Puglisi, 1986) and better credentials/qualifications (Gilmore & Ferris, 1989a; Rasmussen, 1984; Hakel et al., 1970, although Tessler & Sushelsky, 1978 found that it was also important for qualifications to represent a good fit with the job in question) can improve applicant impressions following résumé or qualifications screening. Preferred or recommended content has been found to include a job or career objective (Hutchinson, 1984; Spinks & Wells, 1987; although not recommended by Culwell-Block & Sellers, 1994), experience and education (Culwell-Block & Sellers, 1994; Hutchinson, 1984; Spinks & Wells, 1987), special skills (Hutchinson, 1984; Spinks & Wells, 1987), information about initiative (Culwell-Block & Sellers, 1994), work-related interests (Hutchinson, 1984), and willingness to relocate (Spinks & Wells, 1987). In addition, a functional résumé (which tends to be more self-promoting) has been found to work better than a chronological résumé for men but not for women (Ryland & Rosen, 1987).

In terms of the present program of research, a key aspect of interest in the résumé is the level of applicant-organization congruence portrayed in applicant résumé selfpresentation, along with content relevant to an applicant's job-related qualifications. The impact of differences in applicant-organization fit has not been studied to date. The foregoing review of the existing research literature on the effects of applicant selfpresentation content indicates that such fit-related content may be more effective if it is self-promoting rather than ingratiating, and that biodata related to applicant-organization congruence may work better for highly job-qualified applicants than it does for less jobqualified applicants.

## Research related to the impact of applicant-organization fit and focus in résumé self-presentation

Applicant-organization fit in résumé self-presentation may be defined as the degree to which the applicant qualifications, attributes, and biodata presented in a résumé are *compatible with* organizational goals/strategies and performance demands (needs, issues, culture, climate, values). It may also be defined as the extent to which such applicant information indicates a presence of qualifications, attributes, and other biodata that indicate the presence of organizationally desired traits that are currently lacking. These reflect Kristof's (1996) supplementary and complimentary aspects of P-O fit, respectively. Applicant-organizational focus relates to the extent that such organizationally compatible or organizationally desired features are emphasized in a job

applicant's self-presentation in a résumé or interview, as opposed to a general presentation of one's background.

Schneider's (1987; Schneider et al., 1995) ASA framework would predict the importance of such focus for impression formation by organizational recruiters and hiring managers. (For impression formation theorists, this would depend on the nature of the cognitive categories involved in the "suitable/ideal candidate" template used by the résumé screener, but Schneider's model would predict that such categories will involve organization-level concerns). Additionally, in sales presentations, translation from product features to consumer benefits is considered central to sales communication effectiveness. It is a commonly held belief in sales that focus on customer needs in such a features-benefits presentation is more effective than a general presentation. This is the logic behind the benefits segmentation approach to sales and marketing communications, in which customers or potential customers are classified according to important customer needs/salient product benefits (see Haley, 1985). Extrapolating to the selection context, applicant biodata reflective of personal characteristics, values, and goals considered important by the potential employer and on experience with issues of concern to the potential employer, above and beyond job-specific requirements, should increase perceptions of applicant suitability. In addition, specific applicant translation of such "features" into potential benefits to the prospective employer should further enhance interviewer/recruiter perceptions of suitability. The benefits of concern in the present research project include those that would accrue to an employer from employee P-J and P-O fit.

It may be obvious that applicants will tend to be evaluated more favorably to the extent that they present higher levels of the skills, attributes, and experiences (i.e., qualifications) required for a given position (job fit). However, jobs may be performed differently from organization to organization, in one case with a greater reliance on members of one's work team, in another case more independently or with greater personal latitude in judgment and discretion. This reflects Borman and Motowidlo's (1993) concept of contextual performance, important to organizational effectiveness, yet distinct from job-specific or task performance. Therefore, applicants who present claims or evidence of personal orientation or experience relevant to organizational culture, values, opportunities, and needs should also be evaluated more favorably than those who do not present such claims or evidence. Schneider's ASA framework would support such a prediction. Job focus in applicant self-presentation would involve emphasis on jobspecific skills and requirements (e.g., licensure, proficiency with equipment/software/ work tasks), as opposed to a more general presentation of one's skills and experience. Organizational focus would involve self-presentation emphasis on needs, culture, and goals that are specific to a target organization (e.g., team approach, adaptability to change), as opposed to a more general presentation of one's background that could fit any organization. This goes beyond presentation of general employability characteristics. In the case of applicant-organization focus, a focused self-presentation would extend beyond job-relevant qualifications to emphasize self-presentation content (biodata) that is relevant to organizational characteristics, concerns, and desired contextual performance.

The categories of information that could serve to promote impressions of P-O fit would include values, goals, and personality, according to Schneider's model. It is important that such values, goals, and personality information are presented as congruent with organizational values, opportunities, and culture. The findings of Ugbah and Evuleocha (1992) indicate that the personality characteristic of resourcefulness may be desired broadly by organizations.

Operationally, applicant-organization focus in a résumé could be demonstrated by a specific, organizationally relevant, and targeted career objective, by emphasis on knowledge, skills, and experience that are relevant to *how* a job will be performed in a given organization (e.g., team skills for a position that will be performed in a selfmanaged team), and by indicating *how* these can be used (or have been used in the past) to help the organization/work unit achieve its particular goals and remedy current or anticipated deficiencies (e.g., text that describes how the applicant handled or solved a problem with which the target organization is, or expects to be, grappling), and by biodata indicative of personality-culture fit. An applicant with several years experience in a professional, managerial, or technical position will be likely to have much more potential experience available to list on a résumé than preferred one or two page formats will allow. Selecting from biodata that potentially could be included in a résumé that which is most relevant to the target organization is a demonstration of the impression management tactic of focus on applicant-organization fit.

Research relevant to the impact of applicant-organization congruence in selection contexts may be found in four recent selection studies in which assessments of P-J or P-O

were examined. Rynes and Gerhart (1990) found that evaluation of applicant fit (ratings of firm-specific employability) by professional recruiters in on-campus interviews was influenced by an applicant's interpersonal skills, future goal orientation, and physical attractiveness when general employability was held constant, whereas objective qualifications did not influence assessments of fit independent of impressions of general employability. Recruiters from the same company had more similarity in their ratings of the same applicant (from different interviews) than did pairs of recruiters from different organizations (randomly selected from among the recruiters in the study), indicating that organization-specific factors were involved in such judgments. It should be noted that the finding of a relationship between recruiters' assessment of applicant-organization fit and applicants' future goal orientation would be predicted by the ASA framework (Schneider, 1987; Schneider et al., 1995).

Bretz, Rynes, and Gerhart (1993) conducted a qualitative investigation of the nature of recruiters' evaluations of applicant fit through structured interviews with 54 organizational recruiters at the end of a day of on-campus interviews. Recruiters were asked to think of the one or two applicants that best fit the recruiter's organization and to provide specific examples of things the applicant did or said that indicated good organizational fit. Similarly, recruiters were asked to think of the 1-2 applicants that would provide the worst fit with the recruiter's organization and to furnish critical incidents that demonstrated such lack of fit. Other questions concerned changes in the recruiter's fit assessments from résumé to interview, the three most important things the recruiter looks for in terms of organization-specific fit, and characteristics indicative of general employability but contraindicative of organizational fit. Responses were aggregated across questions for each recruiter, and coding was done such that interpretation was minimized, resulting in 45 indicators of applicant-organization fit.

Thirteen characteristics were mentioned by at least three-fifths of the recruiters (from most to least frequently mentioned): job-related work experience (endorsed by 89% of the recruiters), articulateness, job-related coursework, appearance (including body language in the interview), general communication skills (mentioned by 61% of the sample), perceived cognitive ability, teamwork/cooperative attitude, "focus" (knowledge of one's life goals and the effort one has exhibited to achieve these), work ethic, leadership activities, well-roundedness, self-confidence, and grade point average. Bretz et al. noted that recruiters tended to focus more on characteristics indicative of jobspecific fit (job-related work experience and coursework) and characteristics related to general employability (e.g., articulateness, positive personal appearance, general communication skills) as opposed to factors that could be considered as organizationspecific. However, in response to the questions about applicants who did or did not fit the recruiter's particular organization although generally employable, overall slightly more than half of the recruiters discussed teamwork/cooperation (with over half of business school recruiters listing teamwork but less than half of recruiters interviewing in engineering, arts and sciences, or industrial relations faculties), half mentioned an applicant with focus in a specific (and different) industry, and a substantial minority spoke about fit with their organizational culture or structure and interest in their organization. These responses hold clues to important categories of applicantorganization fit for recruiters--personal orientation toward teamwork for organizations with team-based strategies and structures, expressed career focus in the target organization's industry (or at least avoiding expression of focus in a different industry), interest in the target organization, and fit with an organization's culture or structure. These categories are consistent with the ASA model.

Another interesting aspect of these data, as discussed by Bretz et al. (1993), was the fact that very few recruiters spoke about applicant values as an indicator of organizational fit. This is contrary to predictions that would be generated by Schneider's ASA framework (Schneider, 1987; Schneider et al., 1995).

Explanations offered by Bretz et al. (1993) for recruiters' emphasis on job-specific and general employability indicators of fit over those idiosyncratic to the organization included the following: (1) that college recruiting interviews represent an early stage in the selection process, and (2) that consideration of organization-specific fit takes on more importance later in the selection process. Whereas these explanations may have some merit, Rynes and Gerhart (1990) did find evidence of organization-specific influences in recruiter ratings of applicant employability following college recruiting interviews, as discussed above, and Stevens and Kristof (1995) also found that use of applicant selfpresentation tactics to promote "fit with organization" recruiter impressions was a significant predictor of college recruiting interview outcomes (as discussed below). Bretz et al. did not include measurement of screening/selection outcomes, so it is impossible to determine whether such job-specific or general employability indicators of perceived organizational fit were related to actual screening/selection outcomes.

Adkins, Russell, and Werbel (1994) studied applicant congruence in work values with those of recruiters and with recruiter perceptions of their organizations' values as predictors, and correlated such value congruence with recruiter judgments of the applicant's general employability and organization-specific fit (done immediately following on-campus interviews), as well as with actual invitations for a second interview (measured four months after the initial interview). Using the Comparative Emphasis Scale to obtain an ipsative rank-order measure of achievement, fairness, honesty, and helping/concern for others work values, Adkins et al. found negligible zero-order correlations between recruiter/interviewer judgments of applicant-organization fit and applicant-organization value congruence and between invitation for second interview and applicant-organization value congruence  $\mathbb{B} = -.01$  and -.09 respectively). Whereas Adkins et al. determined that recruiters did distinguish between judgments of general employability and person-organization fit, there was considerable overlap; the zero-order correlation between these ratings was found to be .81, and the best-fit LISREL model involved a correlation of .84 between general employability and person-organization fit factors. These results support two aspects of Bretz et al.'s findings: first, that interviewer perceptions of applicant-organization fit were more dependent on general than on organization-specific employability features (perhaps due to the early stage in selection process at which these on-campus interviews occurred), and second, that applicantorganization value congruence was not a salient aspect of interviewer impressions of applicant-organization fit. Again, the failure to find that applicant-organization value

congruence was important in interviewer impressions of applicant-organization fit runs counter to predictions from the ASA model.

As was the case in the preceding study by Adkins et al. (1994), Cable and Judge (1997) operationalized applicant-organization fit as values congruence. Measuring both recruiter impressions of such congruence and indirect indices of actual congruence in a college recruiting interview setting, these investigators found that interviewers' impressions of values congruence predicted their hiring recommendations, which in turn affected the likelihood of an applicant being extended a job offer. Whereas Bretz et al. (1993) and Adkins et al. (1994) did not find that applicant-organization values congruence was a good indicator of impressions of applicant-organization fit, Cable and Judge found that values congruence was related to successful selection outcomes. The Cable and Judge findings support predictions of the ASA framework (Schneider, 1987; Schneider et al., 1995).

In terms of the relationship between applicant fit with the organization in applicant self-presentations, on the one hand, and recruiter evaluations and screening decisions, on the other, only two relevant studies of on-campus applicant interview behavior exist. As with the Rynes and Gerhart (1990), Bretz et. al. (1993), Adkins et al. (1994), and Cable and Judge (1997) studies, Steven and Kristof (1995) used on-campus recruiting interviews as the setting in which they examined the relationship between applicant use of self-promotion, fit with organization, opinion conformity, other enhancement, and positive nonverbal behavior impression management tactics (each assessed through applicant self-report and through interviewer reports of their use) and

selection outcomes (perceived applicant suitability, likelihood of organizational pursuit, invitation for company site visit, and subsequent job offer). They demonstrated that applicant use of "fit with organization" impression management tactics (as assessed by both interviewees and interviewers) in on-campus recruiting interviews was a significant positive predictor of applicant evaluation, invitation for company site visit, and job offer outcomes. This construct relates to applicant focus on organizational fit, and it was assessed through three survey items that rated use of applicant statements that: 1) explained how the applicant fit with the type of person sought by the organization, 2) expressed enthusiasm in working for the organization, and (3) indicated interest in the position under consideration and in the company. This finding supports results indicating the importance of firm-specific considerations in evaluation of applicants in a college recruiting interview setting (Rynes & Gerhart, 1990; Cable & Judge, 1997). However, it should be noted that Bretz et al. (1993) and Adkins et al. (1994) found that interviewers' evaluation of applicant-organization fit overlapped considerably with their evaluation of job-specific fit (Bretz et al., 1993) and general employability (Bretz et al., 1993; Adkins et al., 1994).

Thus, there is some evidence for the importance of applicant-organization fit for selection-relevant outcomes in college recruiting interview settings (Cable & Judge, 1997; Rynes & Gerhart, 1990; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). However, other research indicates that assessment of applicant-organization fit may involve job-specific and general employability considerations to a greater extent than those that could be regarded as organization-specific. Relevant findings include Bretz et al.'s (1993) finding that

recruiters' "fit" assessments of good and poor interviewees in college interviews depended primarily on two job-specific credential (qualifications) aspects, job-related work experience and job-related coursework, along with several other aspects that would be indicative of general employability and more relevant to information revealed in the interview. But will such findings also be obtained in résumé screening? Substantive résumé research demonstrating personnel officer preference for a statement of job and/or career objective is indicative of the importance of applicant focus on organizational fit in résumé screening, at least with respect to future goal orientation (Hutchinson, 1984; Spinks & Wells, 1987; Wells, Spinks, & Hargrave, 1981), as discussed in the previous section of this paper. Applicant-organization goal congruence is one of the ways that person-organization fit has been operationalized (e.g., Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991), as would be prescribed for job applicant effectiveness by the ASA model (Schneider, 1987; Schneider et al., 1995). Research into the influences of résumé content indicative of different levels of applicant-organization and applicant-job congruence on recruiter/interviewer evaluations and hiring recommendations would help to determine if such an emphasis on job-specific and general employability indicators of applicantorganization fit exists in résumé screening impressions.

It would seem that a plethora of valuable research opportunities exist for study into organizational fit- and focus-related dimensions of written applicant selfpresentations, particularly in terms of their impact on recruiter screening decisions. The present research program addressed issues about the importance of job-specific and organization-specific fit and focus for résumé screening impressions and outcomes. In terms of applicant-organization fit, one aspect that this research examined was the rated importance of P-O fit categories predicted to be salient in employee screening and selection by the ASA framework: personality-culture, values, and goals-opportunities aspects of applicant-organization congruence, along with the types of résumé biodata that recruiters judge to be helpful in establishing P-O fit.

## **CHAPTER 2:** Program of Research

The above review of empirical literature relevant to the relationship of applicant self-presentation with recruiter/interviewer judgments has demonstrated that there has been much research bearing on the importance of stylistic considerations in selection decisions, less on the importance of substantive factors (e.g., credentials/qualifications), and very little on the role of recruiter impressions of applicant-organization fit or on the role of applicant presentational focus/relevance to the target organization's culture, values, opportunities, and needs. There are no published studies on the role of these latter two aspects in a résumé screening setting and only two in an interview setting (Cable & Judge, 1997; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). It was argued that applicant-organization focus on personality, goals-opportunities, and values congruence is a type of impression management tactic, and that it would be expected to be related to more favorable résumé impressions and screening outcomes on the basis of Schneider's (1987; Schneider et al., 1995) formulations about organizational attraction, selection, and attrition. The framework for the present program of research has been extrapolated conceptually from Schneider's ASA framework, which provides guidance with respect to impression formation categories that are likely to be used by organizational representatives in hiring. As initially presented in Figure 1, it is proposed that résumé presentation indicative of applicant-organization congruence will positively influence résumé screening outcomes by predisposing recruiters to positive assessments of potential for applicant-organization fit, partly due to a similar-to-me (us) type influence in accordance with the ASA model. Focus on categories that demonstrate applicant-organization congruence, particularly with

aspects related to the types of people in the organization, should result in a greater likelihood of category confirmations that lead to "acceptable candidate" impression formation by the résumé screener. In addition, it is expected that such influences will occur for applicant-job congruence with respect to the specific position under consideration, based on findings by Cable and Judge (1997), Rynes and Gerhart (1990), and Stevens and Kristof (1995) in college recruiting interview settings.

From the present perspective, one additional problem with the existing research on impression formation in job applicant screening is that most of it has been done in interviewing rather than résumé screening paradigms. As argued throughout this paper, résumé screening is an important but neglected selection process, perhaps the most common one. It is also the process that in most cases would result in the largest reduction in variance in the applicant pool. Whereas there have been a few published studies on the relationship between organizationally focused interview content and recruiter impressions of applicant-organization fit, as well as on the impact of such focused content on screening interview outcomes, there are no such studies involving résumé content. The present series of investigations was designed to yield information about (a) the role of P-O fit considerations in résumé screening impressions and outcomes by organizational representatives, (b) the importance of applicant-organization focus in résumé presentation for résumé screening outcomes, and (c) the importance of applicant-job congruence and focus in résumé presentation for résumé screening outcomes.

Three studies were performed to examine these issues. In the first, human resources professionals were surveyed to determine the relative importance of five aspects

of P-O fit in the hiring process, the usefulness of a specific and focused résumé for establishing P-O fit in résumé screening, the usefulness of 15 categories of résumé information for establishing P-O fit, and the use of résumé rating scales that reflect P-O fit categories. Information from this first study was used for the construction of experimental résumés for the third study. The second study examined the extent to which successfully screened résumés reflected higher levels of person-job and personorganization fit and focus, as compared with résumés that were not successful in résumé screening. In the third and final study, an experiment was performed to determine the extent to which high versus low levels of applicant-job and applicant-organization congruence presented in a résumé impact the assessment of interview likelihood. These three research designs, involving survey, archival research and experimental methods, represent a triangulated approach to study the research questions in this program of research.

## CHAPTER 3: Study 1

The current state of published research into impression formation in résumé screening is surprising in its failure to address even basic questions about this process. In particular, published research relevant to the role of job applicant-organizational fit in such impression formation is nonexistent. Thus, the first study in the present program of research involved a survey of subject matter experts, human resources professionals involved in résumé screening, to explore organizational fit influences that may be important for selection in general and particularly for impressions of P-O fit in résumé screening. Such information was also important for constructing the experimental résumés that were used in the third study in this research program.

Five types of information were solicited: (1) the aspects of P-O fit important in the hiring process in general, (2) the value of a specific and focused résumé in establishing an applicant's fit with the screener's organization, (3) the types of résumé information most useful in establishing potential for P-O fit, (4) how responses to each of the above three questions vary depending on the type of position under consideration, and (5) the use of specific rating scales in résumé screening and their inclusion of categories relevant to impressions of applicant-organization fit.

Information was solicited for each of five broad categories of job positions, to determine if the importance of P-O fit varies by the type of job under consideration. These job categories were selected to span the organizational hierarchy, yet represent job categories which are prevalent in organizations. Three categories involved positions calling for experience (technical support, professional, and manager) and two were entrylevel in nature for recent university and MBA graduates.

Kristof (1996) described four operationalizations of person-organization (P-O) fit common in the literature on P-O fit: 1) congruence between the values of the individual and those of the organization, (2) stemming from Schneider's ASA framework, congruence between the goals of the individual and those of key organizational members, although Kristof notes that congruence between an individual's goals and the opportunities provided by the organization to achieve those goals is also predicted by the ASA model, (3) congruence between an individual's needs and the organizational environment's ability to fulfill those needs, and (4) congruence between the individual's personality and the "organizational personality" or culture. Other important aspects of P-O fit would be predicted by Kristof's model. Among these are (1) congruence between organizational needs and the applicant's ability to meet those needs, and (2) congruence between the industry in which the organization operates and the nature of the industry(ies) in which the applicant has gained his/her experience. This latter aspect is actually a subcategory of (4) above. Each of these aspects are predicted by Schneider's ASA framework.

The present study investigated the rated importance of five of these aspects or operationalizations of P-O fit for establishing P-O fit in the hiring process *in general*. A consideration in the selection of these specific aspects was that they conceivably could be discerned from a résumé. The aspects of P-O fit chosen for study were: 1) congruence between applicant personality and organizational culture, (2) congruence between

applicant and organizational values, (3) congruence between applicant goals and organizational opportunities to meet those goals, (4) congruence between applicant skills and organizational needs, and (5) congruence between the industry(ies) in which the applicant gained his/her experience and the organization's industry. In Kristof's framework, the first two and last of these five aspects of P-O fit reflect complementary fit, and the third and fourth aspects reflect supplementary fit. As no published data exists on the relative importance of these aspects or operationalizations of P-O fit, a directional hypothesis about this relative importance was not generated. Instead, the following two hypothesis were developed with respect to this aspect of the survey:

Hypothesis 1a: Human resources professionals involved in résumé screening will indicate that, in the hiring process in general, each of the following aspects are important for establishing an applicant's fit with the hiring organization: fit between applicant personality and organizational culture, fit between applicant values and organizational values, fit between applicant goals and organizational opportunities to meet those goals, fit between applicant skills and organization-level needs, and fit between industry(ies) in which an applicant gained experience and the industry of the hiring organization.

Hypothesis 1b: The aspects of P-O fit surveyed will differ in their rated importance for establishing an applicant's fit with the respondents' organizations, but there is no theoretical rationale for predicting the relative order of importance.

These five aspects or operationalizations of P-O fit were assessed for each of five types of positions: experienced technical support, entry-level university graduate, entrylevel MBA, experienced professional and manager positions. It is likely that at lower levels of the organizational hierarchy, P-O fit is less critical than at more senior levels, as lower level jobs tend to be more tightly prescribed, whereas at more senior levels, the individual's actions are less prescribed and also likely to have a larger impact on organizational outcomes. Thus the following directional hypothesis was established:

Hypothesis 1c: Human resources professionals involved in résumé screening will indicate that, for each of the above aspects of P-O fit, fit is more important for experienced professional and manager positions than for experienced technical support, entry-level university graduate, and entry-level MBA positions.

According to formulations in the ASA model, as well as those relevant to categorical impression formation, argued above to be the predominant process used in résumé screening, a résumé that is specific and focused on the organization to which it is submitted would assist a résumé screener in confirming categories involved in establishing P-O fit with the screener's organization. This was also investigated in the survey used in Study 1, with the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1d: Human resources professionals involved in résumé screening will indicate that a résumé that is specific and focused on the target organization is more helpful in establishing P-O fit than a résumé that is general and unfocused.

It was expected that the importance of the various aspects of P-O fit studied would be greatest for professional and managerial positions, as opposed to more junior positions, because there is more latitude and opportunity for impact in the former types of positions. It would also be expected that for positions in which P-O fit is most important, a specific and focused résumé would be most useful in establishing such fit. This expectation is reflected in the following hypothesis for this aspect of the survey data:

Hypothesis 1e: Human resources professionals involved in résumé screening will indicate that a specific and organizationally focused résumé is more useful in establishing P-O fit for experienced professional and manager positions than for experienced technical support, entry-level university graduate, and entry-level MBA positions.

The third area of interest in this survey concerned the aspects of résumé information that assist résumé screeners in establishing potential for P-O fit with the screeners' organizations. Survey participants were asked to evaluate 15 specific categories of résumé information for their usefulness in establishing an applicant's fit with the target organization. These categories were taken from a list of important employee competencies compiled in an unpublished internal study at Development Dimensions International, and the categories that could possibly be ascertained from résumé information were utilized for these categories.

This latter line of questioning extends the inquiry of Brown and Campion (1994) into the types of résumé biodata judged by recruiters to be useful in screening applicants for employment. It was anticipated that the categories of résumé biodata used in the present survey would differ in their rated usefulness for establishing potential for P-O fit. The ASA framework would predict that résumé information related to applicant values, personality, and goals will be regarded as especially helpful for evaluating applicantorganization fit. Hypothesis lf: Human resources professionals involved in résumé screening will indicate that some aspects of résumé information are more helpful than others in establishing potential for P-O fit. In particular, résumé information related to applicant goals, personality, and values will be considered more helpful than other aspects of résumé information.

As with the other sections of the survey, survey participants were asked to rate the usefulness of each category of résumé information for each of the five types of positions studied elsewhere in the survey, experienced technical support positions, entry-level university graduate positions, entry-level MBA positions, experienced professional positions, and manager positions. It was expected that the usefulness of each type of résumé information for establishing P-O fit would be greater for experienced professional and manager positions, as opposed to experienced technical support, entry-level university graduate, and entry-level MBA positions. The rationale for this expectation is that the greater potential importance of P-O fit for positions that are less tightly prescribed by the organization will be reflected in greater utility of various types of résumé information for establishing such fit.

Hypothesis 1g: Human resources professionals involved in résumé screening will indicate that each type of resume information surveyed is more useful in establishing P-O fit for experienced professional and manager positions than for experienced technical support, entry-level university graduate, and entry-level MBA positions.

The final question involved in this study concerned the use of specific rating scales and their inclusion of scales related to P-O fit. This question was included to

investigate the use of templates or schemas in résumé screening, which could serve to promote categorical impression formation. Schneider's ASA framework would predict the use of categories related to applicant-organization fit in résumé rating scales. The inclusion of P-O fit categories in résumé rating scales also would demonstrate that Borman and Motowidlo's (1993) call for expansion of performance criteria to include consideration of organizationally relevant contextual criteria has been heeded in employee selection, at least in the résumé screening phase. Therefore, the following hypothesis was generated.

Hypothesis 1h. For organizations that use specific rating scales in résumé screening, a majority of these will include scales relevant to an applicant's fit with the organization's culture and values.

#### Method

**Participants.** Eighty-four individuals actively working in a human resources capacity, each with experience and/or training in employee selection, completed the Résumé Screening Practices Survey. Participants were drawn from the newsletter mailing list of an office of a national management consulting firm whose client contacts consist largely of human resources professionals working in a broad cross-section of organizations. This mailing list from which participants were drawn contained both clients and nonclients and represented a mix of private, public, nonprofit, and government organizations of widely varying sizes and scope of operations. To be solicited for participation in this study, one of the following had to be present in the person's title: personnel, human resources, employee relations, employment, staffing, recruiting/recruitment, industrial relations, labor relations. One hundred and fifty-four individuals were contacted by telephone and asked if they would be willing to complete a brief survey on résumé screening practices. Fifteen refused, and nine referred the researcher to another person in the organization more directly involved in résumé screening. One hundred and thirty surveys were mailed to willing participants, and 84 were returned. Thus the effective participation rate was 54.54%.

Materials. The Résumé Screening Practices Survey is reproduced in Appendix A. Section A of this survey contains five basic background questions about the selection experience and training of the respondent and about the nature of the organization he or she represents. Section B contains four multi-item research questions. In the first research question respondents were asked to rate, using seven-point Likert scales, the importance of five aspects of organizational fit in selecting employees in five employment categories (experienced technical support, entry level university graduate, entry level MBA, experienced professional, and manager). This question pertained to the overall hiring process and thus was not specific to résumé screening. The second question asked respondents to rate (again on seven-point Likert scales for each of the above five employment categories) the usefulness of a specific and focused résumé for establishing an applicant's potential for fit with the hiring organization's culture and values. The third question in Section B asked respondents for ratings (once again on seven-point Likert scales for each of the above five employment categories) of the usefulness of each of 15 categories of résumé information in evaluating the applicant's fit with the hiring organization's culture and values. In the fourth and final research

question, respondents were asked if they use specific rating scales in résumé screening, and if so, whether such rating scales include categories related to the applicant's fit with the hiring organization. Finally, space was provided for comments if the respondent chose to include these.

**Procedure.** A survey methodology with a single survey instrument was used in this study. The potential survey participants were contacted by telephone, and each was asked if he/she would be willing to participate in a survey on résumé screening practices. The script used in these participant recruitment calls may be found in Appendix B. Each of those who agreed was mailed a copy of the survey, an informed consent form (Appendix C), a stamped and preaddressed envelope, and a cover letter explaining the basic purpose of the survey and asking the individual to complete and return the survey in the postage-paid envelope provided within two weeks of receiving it (Appendix D). A single follow-up telephone call was made in cases where a survey was not returned. After the results of the survey were tabulated, all survey respondents were sent a letter outlining the specific purpose and general findings of the survey (Appendix E).

#### Results

Eighty-four surveys were returned of the 130 that were distributed. Thirty-five respondents omitted at least one item of ratings data, and each category of ratings data was omitted by at least one respondent. The most frequent categories of omission were all MBA categories of ratings data, indicating that 28.58 % of the 84 respondents came from organizations that do not hire entry-level MBA graduates. Respondents had a mean

of 12.29 years of experience in employee selection, with a range of 2.0 to 32.0 years, and 76.2% of raters had formal training in employee selection.

Organizations that respondents represented had an average of 2126.47 employees (with a range of 50 to 15,000 employees). Nearly half of the respondents came from organizations that were multinational in scope (46.4%), followed by organizations whose scope of operations was local (23.8%), national (19.0%), and regional (10.7%). The greatest number of respondents came from manufacturing organizations (45.2%), followed by health care (10.7%), government/public administration (7.1%), education (7.1%), financial services (6.0%), and wholesale/distribution, association/not-for-profit, retail, communications/ publishing, agriculture/fishing, professional services, utilities, electronics/high tech, hospitality/entertainment, each representing 4.8% to 1.2% of the returned surveys.

Importance of the five aspects of organizational fit for each of five categories of job positions in the hiring process in general. For the first survey question, dealing with the relative importance of five aspects of organizational fit for each of five categories of employment positions, descriptive statistics can be found in Table 1. Oneway repeated measures analyses of variance were performed for each organizational fit aspect, to determine for which types of positions a given fit aspect was most important. Separate one-way ANOVAs were performed for each organizational fit aspect to examine differences in importance for different job classifications. Two-way ANOVAs were not

Table 1.

Importance Ratings for Five Aspects of Applicant-Organization Fit in the Hiring Process in General, Study 1.

			of	Job Category		
Organizational Fit Aspect	ſ	Experienced Technical Support	Entry-level University Graduate	Entry-level MBA	Entry-level Experienced MBA Professional Manager	Manager
Applicant personality - organizational	M	5.12	5.26	5.48	5.92	6.34
culture	SD	1.40	1.33	1.36	1.13	0.93
Applicant values-organizational	M	5.50	5.55	5.73	6.09	6.31
values	<u>SD</u>	1.28	1.14	1.13	0.85	0.76
Applicant goals-organizational	W	4.99	4.96	5.43	5.71	5.84
opportunities to meet goals	0	1.13	1.15	1.06	101	1.05
Applicant skills-organizational	W	6.30	5.47	5.76	6.38	6.44
needs/requirements	<u>SD</u>	0.89	1.21	1.03	0.77	0.69
Applicant previous industry experience	W	4.75	3.43	3.74	5.60	5.52
- organization's industry	<u>S</u>	1.46	1.37	1.48	10.1	1.10
Note. $\underline{n}$ for each mean = 55 to 81.						-

performed because interactions between organizational fit aspects and job categories were not part of the research question for this aspect of Study 1. In addition, due to the dramatic drop in the number of respondents who completed items for entry-level MBA positions, a two-way ANOVA would involve a substantial loss of participation. Due to the number of one-way ANOVAs performed on the survey data, a Bonferroni correction was applied to the probability level required for statistical significance to control Type I error rate for the multiple ANOVAs performed, resulting in a p of .002 as the upper threshold for statistical significance required for each of the ANOVAs performed in Study 1.

The results of the one-way ANOVAs across aspects of P-O fit, done for each of five position categories, have been summarized in Table 2. For applicant personalityorganizational culture fit, 55 surveys included data for all five position categories. These surveys were used in the ANOVA. Mauchly's Test of Sphericity was significant ( $\chi^2$  (9) = 104.62, *p* < .001). To correct for violation of the assumption of sphericity in the data, the degrees of freedom for the ANOVA were adjusted using the Greenhouse-Geisser correction. (Note: This was required for each ANOVA performed on the data from this survey, as each of the Mauchly's Tests of Sphericity were statistically significant.) The resulting ANOVA was significant. Tukey HSD follow-up tests were performed (Table 3), indicating that the applicant personality - organizational culture aspect of applicant-organization fit was evaluated as significantly more important in hiring for manager positions than for each other position category, significantly more important for experienced professional positions than for entry-level MBA, entry-level university graduate, and experienced technical support position categories, and significantly more important for entry-level MBA positions than for experienced technical support positions (Hypothesis 1b).

For values fit, 54 surveys included data for all five position categories, and these were used in the one-way ANOVA. A statistically significant result was obtained in the . The results of Tukey HSD follow-up tests are displayed in Table 3. These indicate that values fit was rated as significantly more important for manager and experienced professional positions than for entry-level MBA, entry-level university graduate, and experienced technical support position categories (Hypothesis 1b). The ratings for manager and experienced professional positions were not significantly different. Similarly, ratings for entry-level MBA, entry-level university graduate, and experienced technical support positions were not significantly different.

For applicant goals-organizational opportunities aspects of P-O fit, 55 surveys included data for each position category, and the data from these surveys were used in the one-way repeated measures ANOVA. A significant F ratio was found in the ANOVA, following the Greenhouse-Geisser correction to the degrees of freedom (as was the case with the other ANOVAs performed on the data in Study 1). Tukey HSD follow-up tests indicated that applicant goals - organizational opportunities fit in hiring was rated as significantly more important for manager and experienced professional position categories than for entry-level MBA, entry-level university graduate,

Table 2.

# Analyses of Variance for Importance of each of Five Job Position Categories, for each of

Source	df (adjusted)	<u>F</u>				
	Within subjects					
Personality-Culture Fit:						
Job Position Category	3	29.45*				
Егтог	130	(0.89)				
Values Fit:						
Job Position Category	3	23.49*				
Error	129	(0.60)				
Goals-Opportunities Fit:						
Job Position Category	3	24.27*				
Error	121	(0.68)				
Skills-Needs Fit:						
Job Position Category	3	20.47*				
Епог	152	(0.67)				
Industry Fit:						
Job Position Category	3	47.63*				
Ептог	145	(1.52)				

Five Aspects of P-O Fit in Hiring, Study 1.

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

\* <u>p</u> < .001

Table 3.

Tukey HSD Follow-up Tests, Comparing Mean Importance in Hiring Ratings by Position Categories for each Aspect of P-O Fit, Study 1.

					Job Category	
Aspect of organizational fit		Manager	Experienced Professional	Entry-level MBA	Entry-level University Graduate	Experienced Technical Support
Applicant personality-organiza- tional culture	М	<u>6.38</u>	<u>6.04</u>	<u>5.49</u>	5.27	5.11
Applicant values-organizational values	М	<u>6.41</u>	6.22	5.70	5.59	5.52
Applicant goals-organizational opportunities to meet goals	М	<u>6.02</u>	5.89	5.42	5.16	5.14
		Manager	Experienced Professional	Experienced Technical Support	Entry-level MBA	Entry-level University Graduate
Applicant skills-organizational needs	М	<u>6.45</u>	6.38	6.38	5.77	5.55
Industry(ies) of applicant experi- ence-organizational industry	М	5.64	5.47	4.75	3.81	3.45

Notes: 1. Unbroken lines under data indicate nonsignificant differences among underlined means; a break in a line indicates Notes: 1. Unbroken lines under data indicate nonsignificant unterences among undermos means, a constant differences between values. 2. Means reported here may differ from Table 1 due to elimination of cases for missing data. and experienced technical support positions (Hypothesis 1b, see Table 3). It was also rated as significantly more important for entry-level MBA positions than for entry-level university graduate and experienced technical support positions. The latter two position categories did not differ significantly from one another.

For applicant skills-organizational needs fit, 56 returned surveys included importance ratings for each position category. Following a significant F ratio in the one-way ANOVA, with respect to hypothesis 1b, Tukey HSD tests revealed that importance in hiring ratings for skills-needs fit were significantly higher for manager, experienced professional, and experienced technical support positions than they were for entry-level MBA and entry-level university graduate positions (Table 3). No other comparisons achieved statistical significance.

For the final aspect of P-O fit, congruence between the industry(ies) in which the applicant obtained experience and the organizational industry, 53 surveys included ratings for each type of position, and these were used in the one-way ANOVA. The resulting ANOVA produced statistically significant results (see Table 2). Tukey HSD tests (Table 3) established that importance ratings in hiring for this aspect of organizational fit were significantly greater for experienced professional and manager positions than they were for experienced technical support, entry-level MBA, and entry-level university graduate positions were significantly greater than those for entry-level MBA and entry-level university graduate positions.

One can also consider these results from the perspective of a given job position category, investigating which aspects of organizational fit are most important for each job position category, in accordance with Hypothesis 1c. Again, one-way repeated measures ANOVAs were performed to examine the types of organizational fit most important for each job position category involved in the survey, to investigate Hypothesis 1c. As previously noted, a Bonferroni correction, to control Type I error rate over the multiple ANOVAs performed on the data from this study, resulted in an  $\alpha$  level of .002 required to achieve statistical significance. Results of this second group of ANOVAs are summarized in Table 4.

For experienced technical support positions, the one-way ANOVA resulted in a statistically significant F ratio, based on 78 surveys that rated all aspects of fit for this position category. Because Mauchly's test of sphericity was significant, the Greenhouse-Geisser correction is reflected in the degrees of freedom for the <u>F</u> ratio, as was done for each ANOVA performed in this study. Follow-up tests using the Tukey HSD procedure (Table 5) revealed that skills-needs fit was rated as significantly more important than each other aspect of P-O fit, values fit was rated higher than personality-culture fit, goals-opportunities fit, and industry fit, and the latter three P-O fit categories did not differ significantly from each other in importance ratings.

With respect to entry-level university graduate positions, the one-way ANOVA was statistically significant. Seventy-one surveys were complete with respect to the data used in this analysis, and these were included in the ANOVA. Tukey HSD follow-up tests established three partially overlapping groupings of fit aspects (see Table 5):

Table 4.

Analyses of Variance for Aspect of P-O Fit, for each of Five Job Position Categories,

<u>Study 1</u>.

Source	df (adjusted)	<u><u> </u></u>					
	Within subjects	~					
Experienced Technical Support	Positions:						
Aspect of P-O Fit	4	25.32*					
Ептог	248	(1.39)					
Entry-level University Graduate Positions:							
Aspect of P-O Fit	4	46.26*					
Егтог	138	(1.35)					
Entry-level MBA Positions:							
Aspect of P-O Fit	4	32.16*					
Error	183	(1.24)					
Experienced Professional Positi	ons:						
Aspect of P-O Fit	4	9.29*					
Error	269	(0.91)					
Manager Positions:							
Aspect of P-O Fit	4	16.36*					
Error	260	(0.87)					

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

\* <u>p</u> < .001

### Table 5.

Tukey HSD Follow-up Tests, Comparing Mean Importance in Hiring Ratings by Aspect of P-O Fit for each of Five Job Position Categories, Study 1.

	Aspects of Organizational Fit				
Job Position Category	Skills- Needs Fit	Values Fit	Personality- Culture Fit	Goals- Opportunities Fit	Industry Fit
Experienced technical support	<u>6.28</u>	5.50	5.12	4.99	4.74
Entry-level university graduate	5.49	5.56	5.22	<u>4.97</u>	<u>3.45</u>
Entry-level MBA	5.72	5.74	5.45	5.40	<u>3.79</u>
Experienced professional	<u>6.37</u>	<u>6.09</u>	5.92	5.71	5.61
Manager	<u>6.44</u>	6.31	6.34	<u>5.84</u>	<u>5.55</u>

Notes: 1. Unbroken lines under data indicates nonsignificant differences among underlined means; a break in the line indicates significant differences between values.

2. Means may differ slightly from those in Tables 1 and 2 due to the elimination of cases due to missing data in one or more cells of the design.

values fit, skills-needs fit, and personality-culture fit were rated as equivalently important in hiring, as were goals-opportunity fit and industry fit. Industry fit was rated as significantly less important than each other aspect of P-O fit. In addition, values fit and skills-needs fit were rated as significantly more important in the hiring process than goals-opportunity fit.

For entry-level MBA positions, 53 surveys had complete data for the one-way ANOVA of aspects of organizational fit. The resulting F ratio was statistically significant. Follow-up analysis using Tukey's HSD (see Table 5) revealed that values fit, skills-needs fit, personality-culture fit, and goals-opportunities fit did not differ significantly from one other, but that each of these P-O fit aspects were rated as significantly more important in the hiring process than was industry fit.

Seventy-nine surveys were complete with respect to the various aspects of organizational fit for experienced professional positions. A one-way ANOVA was performed on this data, and the results were statistically. As can be seen in Table 5, Tukey's HSD follow-up tests established three partially overlapping groupings of means. Applicant skills-organizational needs fit received significantly higher importance in hiring ratings than each of the other aspects of organizational fit. Values fit did not differ significantly from personality-culture fit ratings, but it was rated as significantly more important in hiring than was goals-opportunities fit and industry fit. Personality-culture, goals-opportunities, and industry fit importance ratings did not differ significantly from one another. For manager positions, 80 surveys included complete data for the one-way ANOVA of importance in hiring ratings for the five aspects of organizational fit. This ANOVA resulted in a significant main effect for organizational fit aspect. Tukey HSD follow up tests (see Table 5) established that the mean ratings for skills-needs fit, personality-culture fit, and values fit did not differ significantly from one another. However, each of these aspects of organizational fit received significantly greater importance in hiring ratings than did goals-opportunities fit and industry fit. In addition, the mean ratings for goals-opportunities fit were significantly greater than those for industry fit.

In summary, the survey results demonstrated that each aspect of P-O fit was rated as higher than the midpoint of the rating scale, with the exception of industry fit for the two entry-level position categories, roles for recent university and MBA graduates (Hypothesis 1a). For each specific position category, fit aspects differed in importance to a great extent (Hypothesis 1b). For positions requiring experience (experienced technical support, experienced professional, manager), congruence between applicant skills and organizational needs was regarded as significantly higher than for entry-level positions following university or MBA graduation. Each aspect of fit was rated as most important in hiring at the manager and experienced professional levels (Hypothesis 1c).

Ratings of the usefulness of a specific and organizationally focused résumé for establishing P-O fit. The second research question on the survey used in Study 1 asked respondents to evaluate, on seven-point Likert scales, the usefulness of a specific and organizationally focused résumé for establishing an applicant's fit with the hiring organization. Descriptive statistics of these results can be found in Table 6. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was performed on the data for the second research question in the survey. Due to a significant result from Mauchly's test of sphericity, the degrees of freedom for the F ratio obtained from the ANOVA were adjusted, using the Greenhouse-Geisser correction. As can be seen from the ANOVA summary table (Table 7), the resulting F ratio was statistically significant. The Tukey HSD procedure was utilized in follow-up tests to determine the source of differences in the significant F ratio (Table 8), and these tests revealed that a specific and organizationally focused résumé was rated as significantly more useful for establishing P-O fit for manager and experienced professional positions than for each of the other three position categories (Hypothesis 1e). For experienced technical support positions, a specific and organizationally focused résumé was rated as significantly more useful than for entry-level MBA and entry-level university graduate position categories. Ratings for the latter two position categories did not differ significantly from one another.

Usefulness of specific categories of résumé information in establishing applicant-organization fit for each of five categories of job positions. The third research question in the survey instrument used in Study 1 involved rating the usefulness of each of 15 categories of résumé information for establishing applicant-organization fit for each of the five job position categories used elsewhere in this survey (experienced technical support, entry-level university graduate, entry-level MBA, experienced professional, and manager positions). Descriptive statistics on the responses to this question may be found in Table 8, and means are displayed in bar graphs in Figure 2. Table 6.

Means and Standard Deviations of Ratings of the Usefulness of a Specific and

Organizationally Focused Résumé for Establishing Org	anizational Fit, Study 1.

Job Category	M	SD	
Experienced technical support	5.16	1.30	
Entry-level university graduate	4.48	1.25	
Entry- level MBA	4.56	1.20	
Experienced professional	5.66	1.15	
Experienced manager	5.78	1.13	

<u>Note</u>. <u>n</u> for each mean = 61 to 83.

Table 7.

Analysis of Variance of the Usefulness of a Specific and Focused Résumé for

Establishing an Applicant's Fit with Organizational Culture and Values for Five Job

Position Categories, Study 1.

Source	<u>df</u> (adjusted)	<u> </u>
Job Position Category	3	44.52*
Ептог	157	(0.94)

Note: Value enclosed in parentheses represents mean square error.

\* <u>p</u> < .001

Table 8.

## Tukey HSD Follow-up Tests, Comparing Mean Ratings of the Usefulness of a Specific

and Organizationally Focused Résumé for each of Five Categories of Job Positions, Study

<u>1.</u>

Manager	Experienced Professional	Experienced Technical Support	Entry-level MBA	Entry-level University Graduate
<u>5.92</u>	5.80	<u>5.28</u>	4.55	4.67

Note: Unbroken lines under data indicates nonsignificant differences among underlined

means; a break in the line indicates significant differences between values.

# Table 9.

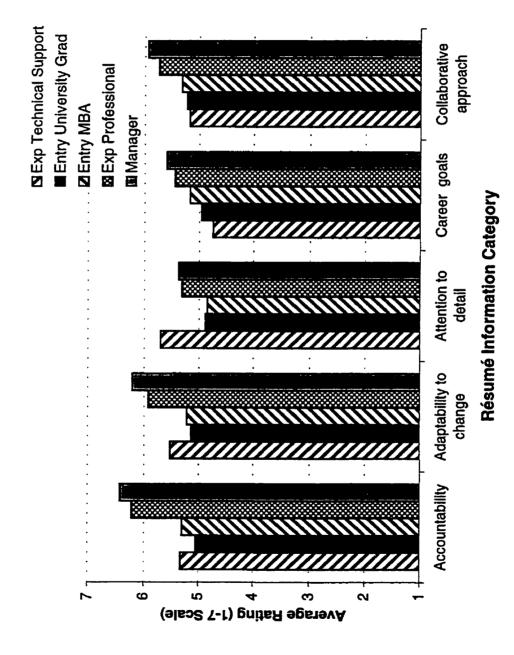
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Means and Standard Deviations of Ratings of the Usefulness of Fifteen Types of Resume Information for Establishing Organizational Fit, Study 1.

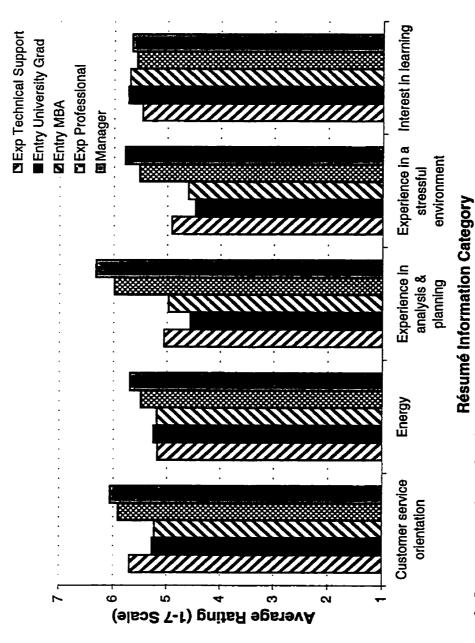
			Job Cate	gory		
Type of Resume Information		Experienced Technical Support	Entry-level University Grad.	Entry-level MBA	Experienced Professional	Manager
Accountability	M	5.33	5.05	5.3	6.22	6.43
	SD	1.48	1.47	1.51	1.14	1.07
Adaptability to change	M	5.52	5.14	5.22	5.92	6.21
	SD	1.25	1.41	1.56	1.12	1.09
Attention to detail	M	5.7	4.88	4.85	5.31	5.37
	SD	1.45	1.41	1.52	1.52	1.55
Career goals	M	4.75	4.96	5.17	5.44	5,59
	SD	1.24	1.29	1.46	1.28	1,30
Collaborative approach	M	5.18	5.23	5.32	5.74	5.94
	SD	1.28	1.15	1.26	1.17	1.21
Customer service orientation	M	5.69	5.27	5.23	5.91	6.06
	SD	1.25	1.45	1.50	1.17	1.22
Energy	M	5.18	5.25	5.19	5.49	5.69
	SD	1.58	1.45	1.57	1.45	1.42

Type of Résumé Information		Experienced Technical Support	Entry-level University Grad.	Entry-level MBA	Experienced Professional	Manager
Experience in analysis & planning	M	5.06	4.56	4.97	5.99	6.33
	<u>SD</u>	1.41	1.30	1.36	0.87	0.84
Experience in a stressful environment	M	4.91	4.47	4.60	5.52	5.79
	SD	1.53	1.32	1,48	1.33	1.36
Interest in learning	M	5.47	5.73	5.70	5.57	5.66
-	M SD	1.41	1.31	1,39	1.36	1.40
Job skills & competencies	M	6.46	4.92	4.92	6.38	6.43
•	M SD	0.72	1.56	1.62	0.85	0.76
Leadership experience	M	4.09	3.82	4.32	5.79	6.48
	<u>M</u> SD	1.42	1.24	1.31	1.06	0.91
Personal impact on results	М	5.19	4.85	5.03	5.87	6.13
•	<u>SD</u>	1.14	1.27	1.39	1.03	1.01
Range of interests	M	3.99	4.23	4,25	4.48	4.64
~	<u>SD</u>	1.28	1.16	1.32	1.24	1.28

<u>Note.</u> <u>n</u> for each mean = 58 to 81.









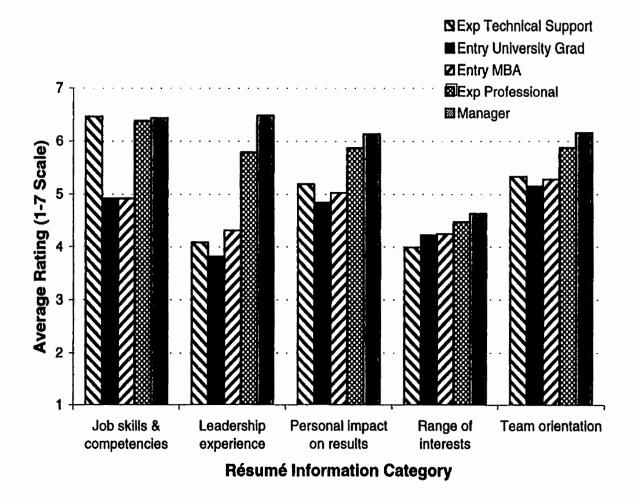


Figure 2. Importance ratings of various types of résumé information for establishing applicant-organization fit, Study I (cont.).

One-way repeated measures ANOVAs were performed for each of the résumé information categories, to determine if there were significant differences in usefulness in establishing P-O fit ratings for the various job position categories. As with the data from the first survey question, separate one-way ANOVAs were performed for differences in rated usefulness for establishing P-O fit for the various résumé information categories at each job category. Again, interactions were not of interest in this research study, and a substantial loss of data would be realized for non-MBA job categories. The ANOVAs were evaluated for statistical significance at an  $\alpha$  of .002 (due to a Bonferroni correction to control Type I error rate at .05 for the multiple ANOVAs performed in this study). Due to the number of ANOVAs performed for these aspects of the data, the results of these ANOVAs have been summarized in Table 10. The results of Tukey HSD follow-up tests for ANOVAS with statistically significant main effects may be found in Table 11.

As can be noted from Table 10, each of the ANOVAs produced a significant main effect for job position category, with the exception of the ANOVA performed on résumé information related to interest in learning. As mentioned above, usefulness ratings were relatively uniform across position categories for this type of résumé information. Followup tests (Table 11) indicated that, for each of the 14 ANOVAs that produced significant results, the various aspects of résumé information were rated as significantly more useful in establishing P-O fit for manager and experienced professional positions than for entrylevel MBA and university graduate positions. In all but two cases, in the analyses for job skills and competencies and for attention to detail types of résumé information,

#### Table 10.

One-way Repeated Measures Analyses of Variances across Job Position Categories, for each Aspect of Résumé Information, Study 1.

<u>n</u>	<u>F</u> Ratio
58	<u>F(</u> 3,136) = 34.20*
57	<u>F(3,122) = 21.81*</u>
58	<u>F(</u> 4,182) = 15.84*
58	<u>F(3,158) = 12.01*</u>
58	<u>F(</u> 3,158) = 16.20*
58	<u>F(3,155) = 13.88*</u>
57	<u>F(3,140) = 6.38*</u>
57	<u>F(3,151) = 36.04*</u>
58	<u>F(3,148) = 19.86*</u>
58	<u>F(3,126) = .67</u>
58	<u>F(2,92) = 56.49*</u>
57	<u>F(3,149) = 72.59*</u>
56	<u>F</u> (3,138) = 27.11*
57	<u>F(3,148) = 11.18*</u>
58	<u>F(3,147) = 21.30*</u>
	58 57 58 58 58 58 58 57 57 58 58 58 58 58 58 58 58 58 58 57 56 57

Note. df for each  $\underline{F}$  ratio adjusted with the Greenhouse Geisser procedure, due to

significant results in Mauchly's Tests of Sphericity.

\* p < .001

### Table 11.

Results of Tukey HSD Tests Following Significant F Tests in the One-Way ANOVAs across Job Position Categories, for each Résumé Information Aspect, Study 1.

			Job Cat	egory	
	Manager	Experienced	Experienced	Entry-level	Entry-level
Type of Résumé Information		Professional	Technical Support	MBA	University Graduate
Accountability	<u>6.55</u>	6.41	5.59	5.29	5.21
Adaptability to change	6.26	6.09	5.63	5.24	5.23
Collaborative approach	6.02	5.86	5.33	5.33	5.26
Customer service orientation	6.00	5.93	<u> </u>	5.22	5.29
Energy	5.58	5.54	5.24	5.18	5.24
Experience in analysis & planning	6.33	6.04	5.28	4.96	4.74
Experience in a stressful environment	5.83	5.69	5.10	4.62	4.57
Job skills & competencies	6.45	6.41	6.45	<u>4.98</u>	4.86
Leadership experience	<u>6.46</u>	<u>5.84</u>	4.16	4.30	3.88
Personal impact on results	6.07	5,88	5.21	5.02	4.88
Range of interests	<u>4.65</u>	4.47	3.96	4,23	4.18

. ,			Job Category							
Type of Résumé Information	Manager	Experienced Professional	Experienced Technical Support	Entry-level MBA	Entry-level University Graduate					
Team orientation	<u>6.17</u>	<u>5.91</u>	<u>5.46</u>	5.28	5.21					
			Job Category							
Type of Résumé Information	Experienced Technical Support	Manager	Experienced Professional	Entry-level University Graduate	Entry-level MBA					
Attention to detail	<u>5.71</u>	5.33	5.31	<u>4.88</u>	4,86					

Table	11.	(cont.)
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			Job Category		
Type of Résumé Information	Manager	Experienced Professional	Entry-level MBA	Entry-level University Graduate	Experienced Technical Support
Career goals	<u>5.53</u>	5.48	5.19	5.02	4.81

Note: Unbroken lines under data indicates nonsignificant differences among underlined means; a break in the line indicates significant differences between values.

ratings for manager and experienced professional positions were significantly greater than those for experienced technical support positions (Hypothesis 1g).

One-way repeated measures ANOVAs were also performed across types of résumé information for each position category. Each of these five ANOVAs produced statistically significant results, and they are summarized in Table 12. Again, the Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied to each set of degrees of freedom to significant results from Mauchly's test of sphericity.

For technical support positions, the ANOVA found a significant main effect for type of résumé information, with the Greenhouse-Geisser correction applied to the degrees of freedom due to a significant result from Mauchly's Test of Sphericity. Tukey HSD follow-up tests indicated that there were seven partially overlapping groups of means among the 15 types of résumé information. The item of job skills and competencies was rated as the most useful aspect of résumé information for establishing P-O fit, significantly more so than each of the other types of résumé information. Ratings for the second grouping of types of résumé information, customer service orientation, attention to detail, adaptability to change, interest in learning, accountability, team orientation, and personal impact on results, did not differ significantly from one another. The third grouping of means involved attention to detail, adaptability to change, interest in learning, accountability, team orientation, personal impact on results, collaborative approach, and energy. The fourth group of means included interest in learning, accountability, team orientation, personal impact on results, collaborative approach, energy, and experience in analysis and planning. Accountability, team orientation,

Table 12.

## Analyses of Variance of Résumé Information Aspect, for each of Five Job Position

25.14* (1.76) 13.43*
(1.76)
13 43*
13 43*
10.10
(1.85)
7.27*
(1.88)
18.76*
(1.43)
24.53*
(1.35)

Categories, Study 1.

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

\* <u>p</u> < .001

personal impact on results, collaborative approach, energy, experience in analysis and planning, and experience in a stressful environment comprised the fifth group of mean ratings. The sixth group of ratings consisted of ratings for personal impact on results, collaborative approach, energy, experience in analysis and planning, experience in a stressful environment, and career goals. Each of these six groupings of mean ratings was significantly greater than the mean ratings for the seventh group, consisting of leadership experience and range of interests ratings. The relative ordering of résumé aspects in rated usefulness for establishing P-O fit may be found in Table 13 for each of the job position categories.

For entry-level university graduate positions, the ANOVA of types of résumé information included 71 surveys and resulted in a significant main effect for résumé information aspect. The results of Tukey HSD follow-up tests showed that ratings of the usefulness of résumé information related to interest in learning were significantly higher than ratings for each of the other types of résumé information. In addition, ratings of the usefulness of résumé information related to leadership experience were significantly lower than ratings for each of the other categories of résumé information. Tukey's HSD revealed four other partially overlapping groups of means intermediate to these two poles. Ratings of the usefulness of customer service orientation, energy, adaptability to change, collaborative approach, team orientation, accountability, career goals, job skills and competencies, personal impact on results, and attention to detail did not differ significantly from one another. The second of these groupings of mean ratings included

Table 13.

<u>Clusters of Résumé Information Categories, Grouped in Clusters Descending in Rated Usefulness for</u> Establishing P-O Fit, Study 1.

Level of Rated	Experienced	Entry-Level	Entry-Level	Experienced	
OSCIUIICSS	I echnical Support	University Grad.	MBA	Professional	Manager
	Job Skills &	Interest in	Interest in	Job Skills &	
	Competencies	Learning	Learning	Competencies	Accountability
	Customer Service	Customer Service			Ioh Skills &
	Orientation	Orientation	Accountability	Accountability	Competencies
	Attention to Detail	Energy	Team Orientation	Experience in Team Orientation Analysis & Planning	Leadership Experience
Résumé Aspects with High Ratings	Adaptability to	Adaptability to	Adaptability to	Adantahility to	Experience in Analysis
	Change	Change	Change	Change	& Planning
		Collaborative	Collaborative	Customer Service	Adaptability
	Interest in Learning	Approach	Approach	Orientation	to Change
			<b>Customer Service</b>		
	Accountability	<b>Team Orientation Orientation</b>	Orientation		
	Team Orientation				
	Personal Impact on				Team Ori-
	Kesults	Accountability	Career Goals	Team Orientation	entation
	Collaboration				Personal
Résumé Aspects with	Contauoracive	Career Goale	Hnore.	Personal Impact on	Impact on
Intermediate Ratings			LINCIBY	Kesuits	Kesults
5		Lob Chillo B			Customer
	Rnerov	Jou Skills &	Personal Impact	Leadership	Service
	/ dimine	Competencies	on results	Experience	Orientation

	Experienced Technical Support	Entry-Level University Grad.	Entry-Level MBA	Experienced Professional	Manager
	Experience in Analysis & Planning	Personal Impact on Results	Experience in Analysis & Planning	Collaborative Approach	Collabor- ative Approach
		Attention to Detail	Job Skills & Competencies		Experience in Stressful Environment
			Attention to Detail		
	Experience in Stressful Environment	Experience in Analysis & Planning	Experience in Stressful Environment	Interest in Learning	Energy
Résumé Aspects with Low Ratings	Career Goals	Experience in Stressful Environment	Leadership Experience	Energy	Interest in Learning
	Leadership Experience	Range of Interests	Range of Interests	Experience in Stressful Environment	Career Goals
	Range of Interests	Leadership Experience		Career Goals	Attention to Detail
				Attention to Detail Range of Interests	Range of Interests

accountability, career goals, job skills and competencies, personal impact on results, attention to detail, and experience in analysis and planning. The third such grouping consisted of career goals, job skills and competencies, personal impact on results, attention to detail, experience in analysis and planning, and experience in a stressful environment. The fourth of these partially overlapping groups of means included experience in analysis and planning, experience in a stressful environment, and range of interests.

With respect to entry-level MBA positions, a one-way ANOVA of 56 surveys resulted in a statistically significant  $\underline{F}$  ratio. Follow-up tests using the Tukey HSD procedure established four broad and partially overlapping groupings of mean ratings for types of résumé information. The first such grouping, with the highest mean ratings among the four groupings, included the following types of résumé information: interest in learning, accountability, team orientation, adaptability to change, collaborative approach, customer service orientation, career goals, energy, and personal impact on results. The second group consisted of résumé information related to accountability, team orientation, adaptability to change, collaborative approach, customer service orientation, career goals, energy, personal impact on results, experience in analysis and planning, job skills and competencies, and attention to detail. The third group of mean usefulness ratings involved résumé information relevant to career goals, energy, personal impact on results, experience in analysis and planning, job skills and competencies, attention to detail, and experience in a stressful environment. The fourth group of means, with the lowest usefulness ratings, included mean ratings for experience in a stressful

environment, leadership experience, and range of interests categories of résumé information.

For the rated usefulness of résumé information for establishing P-O fit for professional positions, based on 73 surveys, the <u>F</u> ratio achieved statistical significance, and the Tukey HSD procedure revealed six partially overlapping groups of mean ratings. The first and highest rated group included mean ratings for résumé information about job skills and competencies and accountability. The second group included mean ratings for accountability, experience in analysis and planning, adaptability to change, and customer service orientation types of résumé information. The third group of mean ratings was quite broad, consisting of ten categories of résumé information: experience in analysis and planning, adaptability to change, customer service orientation, team orientation, personal impact on results, leadership experience, collaborative approach, interest in learning, energy, and experience in a stressful environment. The fourth group of mean ratings involved ratings for personal impact on results, leadership experience, collaborative approach, interest in learning, energy, experience in a stressful environment, and career goals. The fifth group involved mean ratings for the usefulness of résumé information about interest in learning, energy, experience in a stressful environment, career goals, and attention to detail. The final group consisted of a single mean, reflecting ratings that were significantly lower than the usefulness ratings for each of the other categories of résumé information: range of interests.

With respect to manager positions, 74 surveys were included in the one-way ANOVA of types of résumé information. The resulting <u>F</u> ratio was statistically

significant. Tukey's HSD tests revealed that range of interests was rated as significantly less useful for establishing P-O fit than each of the other categories of résumé information, and résumé information about attention to detail was rated as significantly less useful than each other category of résumé information except for information related to range of interests. The remaining mean ratings formed five broad, partially overlapping groups of résumé information categories, arranged from highest to lowest ratings groups as follows: (1) accountability, job skills and competencies, leadership experience, experience in analysis and planning, adaptability to change, team orientation, and personal impact on results, (2) job skills and competencies, leadership experience, experience in analysis and planning, adaptability to change, team orientation, personal impact on results, and customer service orientation, (3) experience in analysis and planning, adaptability to change, team orientation, personal impact on results, customer service orientation, and collaborative approach, (4) team orientation, personal impact on results, customer service orientation, collaborative approach, and experience in a stressful environment, and (5) collaborative approach, experience in a stressful environment, energy, interest in learning, and career goals.

Therefore, each category of résumé information, except for that related to interest in learning, was regarded as more useful for establishing P-O fit for manager and experienced professional positions than for entry-level university graduate, entry-level MBA, and experienced technical support roles (Hypothesis 1g). In terms of Hypothesis 1f, with respect to the categories of résumé information regarded as most helpful in establishing P-O fit, skill and experience-based aspects were highly important for roles calling for experience but not for entry-level roles. Information related to career goals was important only for entry-level roles, whereas values-related information (customer service orientation and accountability) was regarded as important for each type of position.

Use of specific rating scales in résumé screening, and inclusion of categories related to organizational fit in such scales. The final research questions on the survey used in this study asked respondents whether they used specific rating scales in résumé screening, and if so, whether such scales included categories related to P-O fit. Eighty-three surveys responded to the first of these two questions, with 38.1% of the respondents indicating that they use such scales in résumé screening, and 61.4% indicating that they do not use such scales. Of the 32 respondents who indicated that they use specific rating scales in résumé screening, 71.9% indicated that these scales include categories related to an applicant's fit with the organization, and 28.1% replied that their résumé rating scales do not include organizational fit categories (Hypothesis 1h).

## Discussion

The primary aim of the present study was to gather a broad range of information about the role of P-O fit in hiring in general and in résumé screening in particular, as perceived by professionals involved in hiring and résumé screening. This was done for each of five job categories: experienced technical support, entry-level university graduate, entry-level MBA, experienced professional, and manager. In addition to gathering basic information about the aspects of organizational fit that are most important in hiring and the usefulness of various types of résumé information in establishing P-O fit, the results of this study were used to guide the construction of experimental résumés used in the third study in this research project. Important résumé aspects for establishing fit included interest in learning, team orientation and collaborative approach, customer service orientation, energy, and adaptability to change. These categories of résumé biodata were used in the résumés in Study 3, with the exception of energy and customer service orientation, which could be considered as general employability features.

The results of this study did provide strong support for predictions about the importance of organizational fit considerations in the hiring process in general, and in résumé screening in particular (Hypotheses 1a, 1d). This support was evidenced by the high ratings throughout the survey, in most cases exceeding the midpoint of the rating scales.

### Importance of five aspects of organizational fit in the hiring process in

**general.** Examination of the responses to the first research question in the survey, concerning the importance of five key aspects of organizational fit in hiring for five job position categories, confirmed that differences exist in the perceived importance of the five different aspects of P-O fit that were examined (in support of Hypothesis 1b). Overall, applicant skills - organizational needs fit was rated as the most important aspect of P-O fit for the position categories of experienced technical support and experienced professional, and as among the two or three most important aspects of P-O fit for the three remaining job position categories. Values congruence was rated as the second most important aspect of P-O fit in hiring for experienced technical support positions, and as among the two or three most import the other position categories. This

finding with respect to the importance of applicant-organization values congruence in hiring supports the findings of Cable and Judge (1997). On the other hand, Bretz et al. (1993), utilizing an open-ended response format, and Adkins et al. (1994), with a closedended response format, failed to support the importance of applicant-organization values congruence in recruiter assessments of applicant-organization fit.

With respect to Schneider's ASA framework, each of the P-O fit aspects surveyed in this study would be predicted to be important in employee selection. However, P-O fit in this framework has been operationalized as actual and/or perceived values congruence in previous selection research (Adkins et al., 1994; Cable & Judge, 1997). The present findings indicate that such an operationalization speaks to important aspects of P-O fit impressions, but that other aspects of P-O fit predicted to be important in the ASA model (e.g., applicant personality - organizational culture congruence, fit between applicant goals and organizational opportunities, and especially compatibility between applicant skills and organizational needs) are also considered by human resources professionals to be important in selection for a broad range of job categories.

From the perspective of a given fit aspect, fit was most important for managers and experienced professionals for each aspect of fit, in confirmation of Hypothesis 1a. In addition, for each aspect of fit but skills-needs fit and industry fit, experienced technical support positions were in the grouping of job category means in which fit was rated as least important in hiring, which partially supports predictions of Hypothesis 1a. The aspects of this data that did not support Hypothesis 1a were that skills-needs fit and industry fit were rated as least important in hiring for entry-level MBA and entry-level university graduate positions. However, this is understandable, as recent university and MBA graduates would tend to be hired more for knowledge and potential than for their skills and experience. These two aspects of fit could also be considered as job-relevant, and it seems from these findings that more purely organization-level concerns predominate in the selection of new university and MBA graduates.

Usefulness of a specific and organizationally focused résumé for establishing

**P-O fit.** The prediction that a specific and organizationally focused résumé would be rated as useful in establishing applicant-organizational fit was borne out by the significant single-sample *t* tests for ratings of such utility for each of the five position categories that were surveyed, in confirmation of Hypothesis 1d. This would assist in confirmation of organizationally relevant selection categories as recruiters form fit impressions from résumés. Such categories are predicted to be important in employee selection by the ASA framework, and results from the previous question in this survey supported such a prediction. The rated importance of organizational focus in résumés demonstrates that the human resources professionals who participated in this study begin to consider P-O fit issues at the early stage of employee selection at which résumé screening occurs.

The prediction of hypothesis 1e, that such utility of an organizationally focused résumé would be rated as highest for manager and experienced professional positions, was also supported by statistically significant follow-up tests to the ANOVA. This supports the expectation that fit would be more of an issue for these positions, because their content tends to be less dictated by specific task and procedural guidelines and requirements.

Usefulness of various types of résumé information in establishing P-O fit. Each of the 15 categories of résumé information were rated as useful for establishing P-O fit between an employment applicant and the hiring organization. In support of Hypothesis 1f, the level of rated usefulness varied across the various categories of résumé information. The nature of such variation was a function of the type of position under consideration. For each position category, job-related skills and competencies, which easily could be argued to be more of a job-specific fit than an organizational fit dimension, was among the most important aspects of résumé information for establishing P-O fit. This finding reflects the traditional task orientation approach to employee selection (see Borman et al., 1997). It is consistent with the higher importance in hiring ratings for applicant skills - organizational needs congruence found in the responses to the first research question in this survey.

Irrespective of position category, other important categories of résumé information for assessing P-O fit were team orientation, customer service orientation, adaptability to change, and interest in learning (Hypothesis 1f). These characteristics reflect the need for a more flexible work force for organizations today, as proposed by Lawler (1994) and Borman et al. (1997). They are indicative of values (customer service orientation and interest in learning) and personality (team orientation and adaptability to change). These reflect organization-level concerns compatible with predictions of Schneider's ASA framework. Among the lowest utility categories of resume information for each position category was the range of interests category.

Borman et al. (1997) contend that the interview is the appropriate venue for assessing applicant-organization fit. At least in the minds of the human resources professionals responding to this survey, applicant-organization fit is assessed in résumés as well. The second and third studies in this research program will examine whether such intentions are displayed in actual practice.

It was also predicted by Hypothesis 1g that each aspect of résumé information would be rated as most useful for establishing P-O fit for manager and experienced professional positions. This prediction was confirmed for each category of résumé information with the exception of the "attention to detail" category, which was rated as most useful for establishing P-O fit for experienced technical support positions. Since such support roles tend to be characterized by detailed procedures, this finding, although not predicted, is not surprising. The finding of greater utility of each other aspect of résumé information in establishing applicant-organization fit for manager and experienced professional positions is consistent with higher ratings of the importance of each of the five aspects of P-O fit in hiring for these positions (survey question 1), as well as with the greater utility of an organizationally focused résumé for establishing P-O fit for these position categories (survey question 2).

However, an alternate explanation for these findings with respect to manager and experienced professional positions is that people in such positions tend to be older than people completing undergraduate or MBA degree programs at a university. It is not known whether people in experienced technical support roles tend to be younger than experienced professionals and managers, although I cannot think of a reason for such age differences.

A second alternative interpretation of the elevated manager and experienced professional ratings is that there is likely to be less variance among recent university graduates and recent MBAs, as compared with experienced workers in technical support, professional, and manager roles. Perhaps such reduced population variance also reduces the likelihood of looking for and/or discerning P-O fit differences through résumé screening and other selection processes. Such an explanation seems to fit the data better.

Use of specific rating scales in résumé screening, inclusion of P-O categories in such scales. The final questions of the survey, the use of specific rating scales in résumé screening and the inclusion of categories in such scales that reflect P-O fit, were included to ascertain the degree to which human resources professionals use categorical templates in résumé screening, as well as the extent to which these include scales or categories related to P-O fit. Less than half of respondents reported the use of specific rating scales to evaluate résumés (38.1%). However, as predicted, the majority of such scales include those relevant to P-O fit. This finding is supportive of the need for the present program of research, especially due to the high rate of inclusion of P-O fit categories in the résumé rating scales that are used by the survey respondents (71.9%). This phenomenon supports the importance placed on applicant-organization fit by human resources professionals in actual résumé screening practice. A limitation to the design of Study 1 was recently discussed by Schwarz (1999). His review of research on self-report data indicates that providing research participants with response categories can increase response endorsement, as compared to an open response format. Thus, it is possible that providing survey respondents with the five aspects of organizational fit and fifteen categories of résumé information increased the importance or usefulness ratings of these items, compared to an alternative design involving open response format. Further research comparing response formats would help to resolve this issue.

#### CHAPTER 4: Study 2

The second study in the present research program was designed to investigate the role of job-specific fit, job focus, organizational fit, and organizational focus in the cover letters and résumés of job applicants who were successful and unsuccessful in the résumé/cover letter screening phase of an actual selection situation. Subject matter experts (people employed in professional human resources positions with a minimum of 10 years of experience) performed blind ratings of each of these four factors for 36 résumés and cover letters submitted in response to an advertisement for an administrative support position. A one-way MANOVA design was used to determine whether résumés/cover letters that were successful in the initial screening differed in these ratings from résumés/cover letters that received an unsuccessful screening outcome.

The rationale for this study was to extend the findings of the first study in the present program of research. In the first study, human resources professionals involved in employee selection gave their perceptions of the importance of aspects of organizational fit, the usefulness of a focused résumé in establishing potential for applicant-organization fit, and the utility of various types of résumé information in determining the potential for such fit. Although these findings provide insight into selection practices, Graves and Karren (1992) demonstrated that self-reports can be imprecise reflections of how selection criteria are applied in actual practice.

This second study examined results for an actual résumé screening, to determine whether successful and unsuccessful résumés/cover letters would differ in the ratings of job-specific and organizational fit they received from a panel of expert raters. Two additional measures were examined in the present study, related to an applicant's *focus* on the job and on the organization in his or her résumé and cover letter. As discussed above, focus is somewhat distinct from fit. A résumé may be focused on a particular type of job or on a particular type of organization and organizational culture, which is an other-directed or ingratiatory type of impression management tactic. However, such focus is likely to backfire if the applicant lacks actual fit. Indeed, Kristof (1996) went as far as to propose that job applicants who use stronger impression management tactics to convey impressions of P-O fit will tend to be lower in actual P-O fit after hire.

In addition to the one-way MANOVAs to test for differences in rated potential for job fit, job focus, potential for organizational fit, and organizational focus in successful and unsuccessful résumés and cover letters, hierarchical multiple regression analyses were utilized to test for the contributions to screening outcome prediction of ratings of potential for job fit, potential for organizational fit, and their interaction. It is expected that potential for organizational fit ratings will interact with potential for job fit ratings in prediction of résumé screening outcome, such that higher levels of rated organizational fit will be associated with greater likelihood of screening success at higher levels of rated job fit than will be the case for lower levels of rated job fit. This expectation is based on a belief that job fit is a primary concern in résumé screening, and that a sufficient level of job fit is necessary before organizational fit considerations become salient. This prediction has received conceptual support from Borman and Motowidlo (1997).

Finally, examination of the contribution of focus to prediction of screening outcome by fit was conducted through hierarchical multiple regression analyses on (1) combined résumé job and organizational fit ratings, combined résumé job and organizational focus ratings, and their interaction, and (2) combined cover letter job and organizational fit ratings, combined cover letter job and organizational focus ratings, and their interaction. Significant interaction effects were expected, indicating that focus is beneficial in terms of screening outcome at higher levels of fit but neutral or even detrimental at lower levels of fit. At lower levels of fit, it is expected that focus will serve to highlight lack of fit, whereas at higher levels of fit, it is expected that focus will serve to enhance impressions of fit.

The hypotheses tested in this study were:

Hypothesis 2a: Résumés and cover letters that received "proceed further" outcomes in the résumé screening will receive higher ratings of potential for job-specific fit (P-J fit) and job focus with respect to the target job opening, as compared with résumés and cover letters that received "do not proceed further" outcomes in the original résumé screening.

Hypothesis 2b: Résumés and cover letters that received "proceed further" screening outcomes will receive higher potential for organizational fit and higher organizational focus ratings than will those who receive "do not proceed further" screening outcomes.

Hypothesis 2c: Ratings of applicant résumé focus on the job and organization will add to prediction of screening outcomes that is achieved by job and organizational fit ratings in an interaction with such fit ratings. The nature of such an interaction is predicted to demonstrate that focus is beneficial at higher levels of fit but not at lower levels of fit.

Hypothesis 2d. Applicant P-O fit, discerned from a résumé, will add to prediction of résumé screening outcomes by applicant P-J fit, in an interaction with the P-J fit ratings. This interaction will indicate that P-O fit is more beneficial for résumé screening success at higher levels of rated P-J fit than at lower levels of rated P-J fit.

The first two of these hypotheses were tested twice. They were tested once with ratings of résumés (since résumés were the focus of the present research program), and again with ratings for the cover letters (since these were part of the original applicant submissions). The final two hypotheses are specific to résumés.

## Method

**Participants.** A sample of 36 résumés and cover letters, responses to an actual advertisement for a Receptionist/Word Processor at an office of a national management consulting organization, were used in this study. Eighteen of the résumé/cover letter submissions received a "proceed further with this applicant" outcome in the original screening of 235 responses to the advertisement. The remaining eighteen résumés and cover letters were randomly selected from the 217 submissions that received "do not proceed further with this applicant" outcomes in the original applicant screening of ad responses. The identifying information, including name, address, telephone number, and name of last employer, was removed from the résumés and cover letters prior to their use in this study, in accordance with APA guidelines for the treatment of human participants in archival research.

Materials. Eight rating scales were used to assess applicant-job focus, applicantorganization focus, applicant-job fit, and applicant-organization fit, respectively, in each résumé and cover letter in the sample (see Appendix F). In addition, raters were given a copy of the newspaper advertisement that ran to solicit résumés for the position (with the name and address of the hiring organization deleted) and a one paragraph profile of the organization, including information about the founder/managing partner and the organizational culture (see Appendix G). As discussed above, résumés and cover letters included 18 that received "proceed further" outcomes in the original screening and 18 that were randomly drawn from the 217 that received "do not proceed further" outcomes in the original résumé screening.

Raters. Three subject matter experts in résumé screening served as raters. Each rater was a human resources professional actively working in the field, with a minimum of 10 years training and experience in selection. The raters evaluated each résumé and cover letter in the sample, using the eight rating scales referred to above and presented in Appendix F. The raters volunteered their time, and they were given training and practice in using the rating scales on six sample résumés and cover letters prior to and at two breaks during the rating of the experimental résumés and cover letters.

**Procedure.** The raters performed ratings of the 36 résumés and cover letters in a single session. Each rater received the résumés and cover letters in a different random order. Cover letters and résumés were kept in their original pairings. Names, contact information, names of references, and names of current/last employer were removed from

each résumé and cover letter prior to the study, and generic labels (e.g., "applicant name," "address", "current employer name") were put in their place.

Prior to the start of the session, raters were told only that the study was about résumés and cover letters. They were given the rating scales, background job and company information, and training on the meaning of person-job fit (involving the potential to perform the tasks involved in the position of receptionist/word processor), of person-organization fit (involving the applicant's potential to fit with the organization's culture and values), and of person-job focus and person-organization focus. Each construct's definition appeared at the top of its rating scale form. The latter two concepts were described as distinct from potential for fit, involving instead an applicant's presentation of his/her background in a manner focused on the job or organization, as opposed to a more general presentation of one's background. Immediately following the completion of the study, the raters were told about the exact purpose and nature of the study.

This study used one way MANOVAs to determine whether results of the preinterview résumé screening (do not proceed further with this applicant, continue to consider for selection, coded as 1 or 2) were associated with differences in the mean ratings of potential for job-specific fit, job focus, potential for organizational fit, and organizational focus (averaged across the three raters) of the résumés and cover letters. Two one-way MANOVAs were performed, one using ratings of the résumés, and the second using ratings of the cover letters. In addition, two hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed to determine the extent to which combined job and organizational focus, as well as the interaction between such aggregated focus ratings and aggregated fit ratings, added to prediction of applicant screening outcome by combined job and organizational fit ratings. One such analysis was performed for résumé ratings and the second for cover letter ratings.

Finally, a third hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed on résumé job fit and organizational fit ratings, using screening outcome as the criterion measure. Potential for job fit ratings were entered first, then potential for organizational fit ratings were entered into the regression equation, followed by the entry of the product of these two ratings (their interaction).

## Results

Interrater reliability was computed for each of the eight rating categories involved in the study using an analysis of variance intraclass formula approach, as recommended by Ebel (1951). These may be found in Table 14. It can be seen that reliability coefficients ranged from a low of .67 for ratings of résumé organizational focus to a high of .88 for ratings of cover letter potential for job fit and cover letter job focus. Overall, reliabilities were higher for cover letter ratings than for résumé ratings, perhaps because of the greater amount and diversity of information found in the typical résumé. Each cover letter involved in this study was a single page in length, whereas most résumés used in the study were two or more pages in length. Ratings data were averaged across raters for use in the remaining analyses performed for Study 2. Table 14.

Unbiased Estimates of Interrater Reliability Coefficients for Three Raters of 36 Résumés and Cover Letters, Study 2.

	Reliability Coefficients				
Type of Rating	Résumé	Cover Letter			
Potential for Job-Specific Fit	.69	.88			
Job Focus	.70	.88			
Potential for Organizational Fit	.71	.85			
Organizational Focus	.67	.85			

Note. Reliability coefficients are based on the ratings of 36 résumés and 36 cover letters.

A matrix of the intercorrelations among the four résumé and four cover letter ratings is displayed in Table 15. Several patterns should be noted in this information. First, the correlations among résumé ratings (r = .80 to .92) and those among cover letter ratings (r = .94 to .96) are quite high. In addition, the correlations among résumé and cover letter ratings show considerable overlap (r = .53 to .80), although to a lesser degree than those within either résumé or cover letter ratings. Correlations between potential for job fit ratings and job focus ratings and between potential for organizational fit ratings and organizational focus ratings tended to be higher for both résumé as well as cover letter ratings. However, among résumé ratings as well as among cover letter ratings, the highest correlation overall was found between job focus ratings and organizational focus ratings.

Descriptive statistics for each rating scale, subdivided by résumé/cover letter screening outcome category, may be found in Tables 16 and 17, and the means are graphed in Figures 3 and 4. These results reveal that each of the mean ratings for the "proceed further" outcome résumés and cover letters were higher than those for the résumés and cover letters that received "do not proceed further" outcomes. Another notable aspect of these data is the relatively low standard deviations of the ratings, given that ratings were made on seven-point Likert scales. Overall, the standard deviations for cover letter ratings were higher than those for résumé ratings. In addition, inspection of this table reveals that for *cover letter* ratings, standard deviations were somewhat higher for cover letters that received "proceed further" outcomes, whereas for *résumé* ratings,

# Table 15.

# Correlation Matrix for the Four Résumé and Four Cover Letter Ratings, Study 2.

Rating	Résumé Job Fit	Résumé Job Focus	Résumé Organiza- tional Fit	Résumé Organiza- tional Focus	Cover Letter Job Fit	Cover Letter Job Focus	Cover Letter Organiza- tional Fit	Cover Letter Organiza- tional Focus
Résumé Job Fit	1.00	.88	.80	.86	.56	.59	.54	.53
Résumé Job Focus		1.00	.86	.92	.68	.66	.70	.64
Résumé Organi- zational Fit			1.00	.90	.65	.68	.69	.65
Résumé Organi- zational Focus				1.00	.76	.80	.79	.76
Cover Letter Job Fit					1.00	.96	.95	.94
Cover Letter Job Focus						1.00	.95	.96
Cover Letter Organizational Fit							1.00	.95
Cover Letter Organizational Focus								1.00

Table 16.

Descriptive Statistics for 18 Successful and 18 Unsuccessful Résumés on Four Rating

Rating Category	Screening Outcome	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
	Do Not Proceed Further	2.74	1.01
Job Fit	Proceed Further	3.48	0.68
	Do Not Proceed Further	2.37	1.05
Job Focus	Proceed Further	2.96	0.50
	Do Not Proceed Further	2.50	0.97
Organizational Fit	Proceed Further	3.22	0.66
	Do Not Proceed Further	2.17	1.00
Organizational Focus	Proceed Further	2.63	0.62

Scales, Averaged across Raters, Study 2.

<u>Note</u>:  $\underline{n} = 18$ .

Table 17.

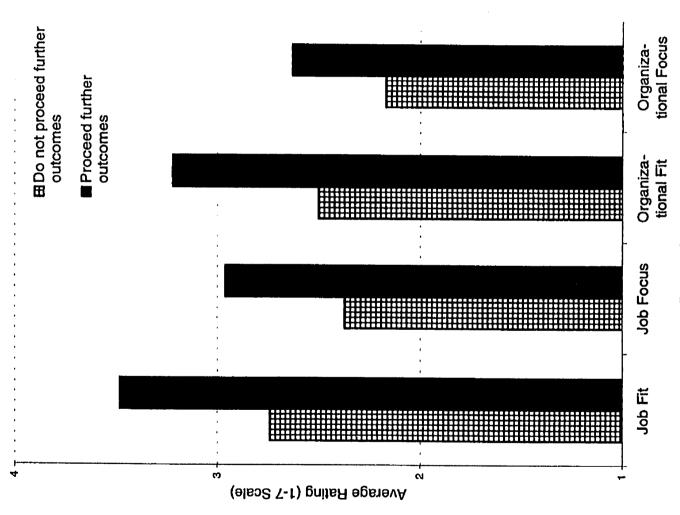
Descriptive Statistics for Successful and Unsuccessful Cover Letters on Four

	······		
Rating Category	Screening Outcome	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Job Fit	Do Not Proceed Further	2.52	1.26
	Proceed Further	3.26	1.51
Job Focus	Do Not Proceed Further	2.30	1.25
	Proceed Further	3.11	1.52
	Do Not Proceed Further	2.20	1.21
Organizational Fit	Proceed Further	2.76	1.38
	Do Not Proceed Further	2.13	1.13
Organizational Focus	Proceed Further	2.89	1.54

Rating Scales, Averaged across Three Raters, Study 2.

<u>Note</u>:  $\underline{n} = 18$ .





# Rating Category

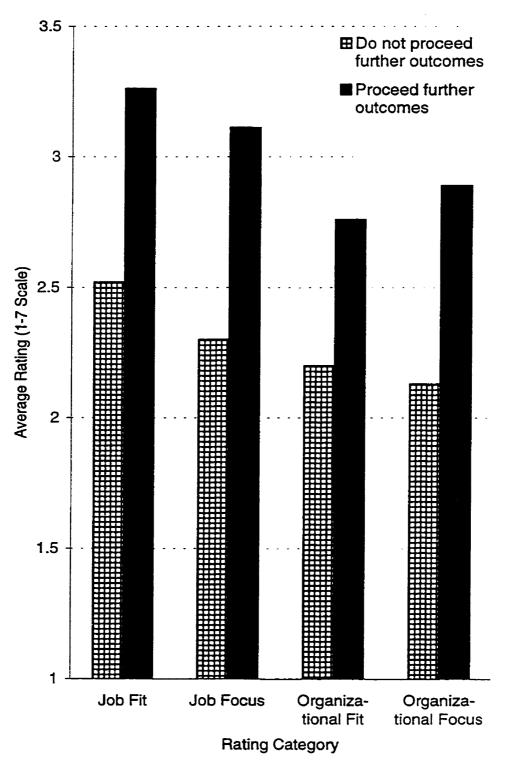


Figure 4. Mean ratings for 18 unsuccessful and 18 successful cover letters, averaged across three raters, Study 2.

standard deviations were somewhat lower for résumés that received "proceed further" outcomes.

A one-way MANOVA was performed to determine if the initial résumé screening outcome (proceed further, do not proceed further) was associated with differences in averaged résumé ratings of potential for job-specific fit, job focus, potential for organizational fit, and organizational focus as dependent variables. Due to the fact that two MANOVAs were performed in this study, the probability level required for statistical significance was adjusted from .05 to .025, utilizing the Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Pillai's Trace multivariate test revealed a significant multivariate effect for résumé screening outcome (F(4,31) = 3.32, p = .023). The results of follow-up univariate ANOVAs are displayed in Table 18. It can be noted that these revealed significant main effects indicating that each résumé screening outcome was associated with significantly different résumé ratings of potential for jobspecific fit and of potential for organizational fit. In each of these two significant effects, résumés that received "proceed further" résumé outcomes received significantly higher résumé ratings of potential for job and organizational fit. These findings support relevant predictions in Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

A second one-way MANOVA was performed on the cover letter ratings. In this analysis, the nature of the screening outcome was not associated with statistically significant multivariate differences in cover letter ratings on the four scales (Pillai's Trace F(4,31) = 1.13, p > .05).

## Table 18.

# Analyses of Variance for Four Résumé Ratings Following a Statistically Significant

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>
	Between subjects	
Screening outcome (Job Fit)	1	6.64*
S within-group error	34	(0.74)
Screening outcome (Job Focus)	1	4.66
S within-group error	34	(0.68)
Screening outcome (Organizational Fit)	1	6.82*
S within-group error	34	(0.69)
Screening outcome (Organizational Focus)	1	2.76
S within-group error	34	(0.70)

## Multivariate Effect.

Notes. 1. Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

2. Analyzed at .025 level of significance due according to Bonferroni correction to control for Type I error.

\* <u>p</u> < .025

The first of three hierarchical multiple regression analyses involved averaged résumé job and organizational fit ratings, averaged résumé job and organizational focus ratings, and the product (interaction) of these two ratings composites as three predictors of the original screening outcome. Each was entered in the above order on three separate steps in the hierarchical regression. The resulting regression model has been summarized in Table 19. As can be seen, the combined résumé fit ratings were a significant predictor of résumé screening outcome, accounting for 18.3% of the variance in the criterion. The addition of the combined résumé focus ratings accounted for an additional 6.7% of the variance in the screening outcome. The addition of the focus predictor failed to add significantly to the prediction of the screening outcome [F change (1,17) = 2.96, p < .10]. However, with respect to Hypothesis 2c, the interaction of fit and focus did add significantly to the prediction achieved with these first two predictors alone [F change (1,32) = 7.25, p = .01]. This interaction has been depicted graphically in Figure 5 by plotting the resulting regression equation with high and low values of rated fit and rated focus. As can be seen, the form of the interaction is opposite to that predicted in Hypothesis 2c, as *lower* levels of rated focus were associated with greater likelihood of résumé screening success at higher levels of rated fit, whereas focus was relatively neutral with respect to likelihood of screening success at lower levels of rated fit.

The second hierarchical multiple regression was identical to the first, except that cover letter ratings and screening outcomes (respectively) were used in the analyses. This regression model may be found in Table 20. In this analysis, neither predictor nor Table 19.

Model of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis with Combined Résumé Fit Ratings as the First Predictor, Combined Résumé Focus Ratings as the Second Predictor, and the Résumé Fit x Focus Interaction as the Third Predictor.

Predictor	R	<u>R</u> <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	<u>R</u> <sup>2</sup> Change	Ē	<u>df</u>	p
Résumé Fit	.43	.18	.46	.18	7.64	1,34	.01
Résumé Focus	.50	.25	.45	.07	2.96	1,33	.10
Résumé Fit x	.64	.40	.41	.15	8.22	1,32	.01
Focus							

<u>Note</u>:  $\underline{n} = 36$ .

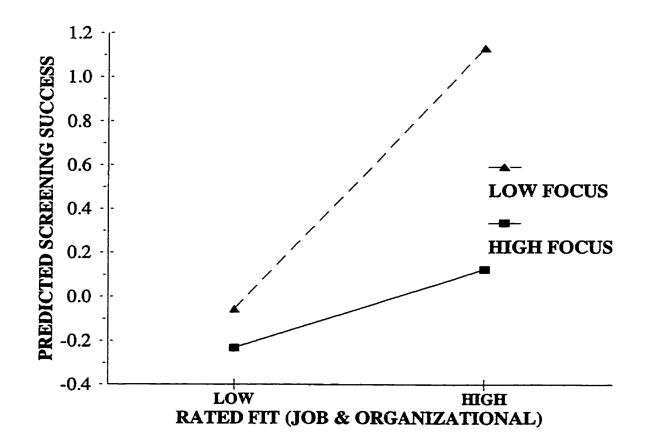


Figure 5. Interaction of combined résumé fit ratings with combined résumé focus ratings for prediction of résumé screening outcome, Study 2.

Table 20.

Model of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis with Combined Cover Letter Fit Ratings as the First Predictor, Combined Cover Letter Focus Ratings as the Second Predictor, and the Product of Aggregate Fit and Aggregate Focus Ratings as the Third Predictor.

<u>R</u>	<u>R</u> <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	<u>R</u> <sup>2</sup> Change	<u>F</u>	<u>df</u>	p
.244	.06	.50	.06	2.16	1,34	.15
.315	.10	.50	.04	1.45	1,33	.24
.325	.11	.50	.01	0.23	1,32	.63
	.244 .315	.244 .06 .315 .10	.244 .06 .50 .315 .10 .50	.244 .06 .50 .06 .315 .10 .50 .04	.244 .06 .50 .06 2.16 .315 .10 .50 .04 1.45	.244 .06 .50 .06 2.16 1,34 .315 .10 .50 .04 1.45 1,33

<u>Note</u>:  $\underline{n} = 36$ .

the interaction between predictors accounted for a significant amount of variance in the criterion of cover letter screening outcome.

Finally, to determine whether P-O fit impressions accounted for variance in addition to that accounted for by P-J fit or through interaction with P-J fit, one additional hierarchical multiple regression was performed. This was done as a test of Hypothesis 2d. Résumé ratings of potential for job fit were entered on the first step of the regression, followed by résumé ratings of potential for organizational fit, followed by the product of these two sets of ratings. As can be seen from the results in Table 21, résumé P-J fit accounted for 16% of the variance in résumé screening outcome (p = .014), and the addition of P-O fit ratings into the regression explained an additional 2% of the variance in the criterion (n.s.). As was the case with the other résumé regression analysis, the interaction of résumé job fit x résumé organizational fit added significantly to prediction of résumé screening outcome, explaining an additional 15% of the variance in the criterion [F change (1,32) = 7.25, p < .01]. This interaction has been displayed graphically in Figure 6. As can be seen, higher levels of rated P-O fit were associated with greater likelihood of a successful résumé screening outcome at higher levels of rated P-J fit, than was the case at lower levels of rated P-J fit.

## Discussion

The human resources professionals that served as raters for this study achieved acceptable to high levels of interrater reliability, indicating that potential for job-specific fit, job focus, potential for organizational fit, and organizational focus can be rated reliably in résumés and cover letters. In terms of résumé ratings, these findings are in Table 21.

Model of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis with Résumé Job Fit Ratings as the First Predictor. Résumé Organizational Fit Ratings as the Second Predictor, and the

Predictor	<u>R</u>	<u>R</u> <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	<u>R</u> <sup>2</sup> Change	<u>F</u>	<u>df</u>	p
Résumé Job Fit	.40	.16	.47	.16	6.64	1,34	.01
Résumé Organizational Fit	.43	.18	.47	.02	0.82	1,33	.37
Résumé Job x Organizational Fit	.58	.33	.43	.15	7.25	1,32	.01

Product of these two Ratings as the Third Predictor.

<u>Note</u>:  $\underline{n} = 36$ .

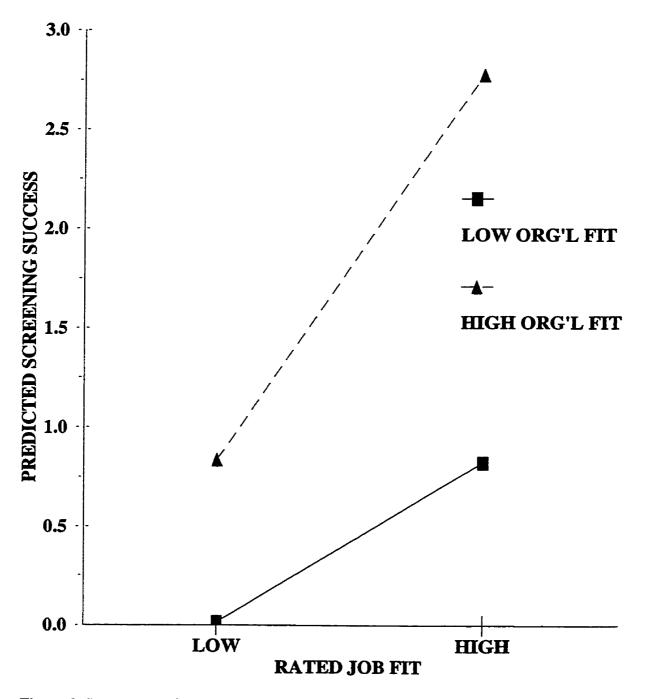


Figure 6. Interaction of résumé ratings of potential for P-J fit with those of potential for P-O fit in prediction of résumé screening outcome, Study 2.

agreement with those of Brown and Campion (1994) and Levine and Flory (1975). The finding of higher reliabilities in cover letter ratings (.85 - .88) in the present study, as compared with résumé rating reliabilities (.67 - .71), could be attributed to several influences. One factor could be the greater length of the résumés as compared with the cover letters in this study. Another could be that résumés tend to cover a greater diversity of information than is the case for cover letters. Aggregating ratings across raters served to further reduce error in measurement in the ratings for data analysis in the present study.

As predicted by Hypotheses 2a and 2b, "proceed further" outcome résumés received significantly higher ratings for potential for job-specific fit and for potential for organizational fit. The former finding is consistent with traditional approaches to employee selection, as described by Borman et al. (1997). The latter of these two findings supports predictions of the ASA framework with respect to the importance of organizationally relevant considerations in employee selection, as résumés judged to demonstrate higher levels of applicant potential for organizational fit tended to be associated with successful résumé screening outcomes.

However, the predicted association of résumé screening success with higher job focus and organizational focus ratings failed to achieve statistical significance in the MANOVA, although mean ratings were in the predicted direction. These latter results were contrary to predictions in Hypotheses 2a and 2b. They were not associated with greater variability in the focus ratings. However, the level of job and organizational focus ratings of the applicant résumés were lower than were the ratings for potential for applicant-job and potential for applicant-organization fit. Therefore, the power to detect these differences could have been a factor in these findings with respect to focus, as there were only 18 résumés in each screening outcome group. An explanation for these findings was provided by a hierarchical multiple regression.

The hierarchical multiple regression on résumé ratings and outcomes demonstrated that combined job and organizational focus ratings added substantially ( $R^2$ change of .07) but not significantly (p < .10) to prediction by combined job and organizational fit ratings. However, the interaction between these two sets of predictors did achieve statistical significance. This demonstrated that such focus was detrimental (in terms of screening outcome) for job applicant résumés at higher levels of perceived job and organizational fit, but not at lower levels of fit. This finding runs counter to predictions about the added benefit of job and organizational focus, as such focus tended to diminish the benefit of fit. It could be that focus was regarded as manipulative and insincere by the original résumé screener, backfiring in terms of screening outcome success. Such a conjecture has been supported in research on applicant impression management in résumés and cover letters by Knouse et al. (1988), in which impression management tactics resulted in lower ratings of applicant believability and honesty.

The hierarchical multiple regression that utilized résumé job fit and organizational fit and their interaction as predictors of screening outcome demonstrated a significant interaction between these predictors. This interaction showed that organizational fit tends to have a more positive impact on screening success for résumés that also receive high P-J fit ratings than is the case for low P-J fit résumés. Such a finding may be an indication that organizational fit considerations are more important for the screener when a résumé is perceived to reach a threshold of perceived job fit.

The high intercorrelations among rating categories demonstrated extensive overlap among ratings in this study. At least three possibilities exist to account for these findings. The first is that the distinction between job and organizational congruence was blurred for the human resources professionals who served as raters, possibly due to their own personal expansion of the work performance criterion domain, as recommended by Borman and Motowidlo (1993). Such an interpretation is supported by the results of the hierarchical multiple regressions performed with résumé P-J fit and P-O fit predictors, which demonstrated that these two predictors accounted for virtually identical variance in the screening outcome criterion. Further support for this conjecture was provided by Bretz et al. (1993), who found, using an open-ended response format, that applicantorganization fit tended to be described in terms of job fit (experience) and general employability features, rather than those that could be considered as organizationspecific. The second possibility is for the high degree of ratings overlap is that the instructions provided to raters did not make these distinctions sufficiently clear to the raters. Alternatively, perhaps the instructions were clear, but the task of making such distinctions from résumés and cover letters is quite difficult. The final study in this research project will examine this latter possibility.

The differences in résumé screening outcomes (successful/unsuccessful) associated with varying levels of rated résumé job-specific and organizational fit was the focus of the present study. However, the initial applicant screening that resulted in the "proceed further" and "do not proceed further" outcomes involved both cover letters and résumés. With respect to cover letter ratings, the MANOVA revealed that successful and unsuccessful cover letters were not associated with significant differences in their ratings on the four rating scales, whereas for résumés, significant differences were found in potential for applicant-job fit and in potential for applicant-organization fit ratings. In terms of the generation of the original applicant screening outcomes, it is possible that more focus was placed on the résumé than on the cover letter in arriving at the initial screening decisions. This conjecture is worthy of further investigation.

In summary, the results of this second study provide further support for the importance of résumé-job as well as résumé-organization congruence in résumé screening outcomes. These results were obtained from a reanalysis of an actual applicant screening undertaken for an experienced technical support type role, that of receptionist-word processor. This demonstration in such a setting establishes high external validity for the conclusions about the importance of written presentations of applicant-job congruence as well as that of applicant-organization congruence for résumé screening outcomes.

Predictions about the importance of cover letter-job and cover letter-organization congruence were not supported by the results of this study. In addition, predictions about the importance of résumé-job focus and résumé-organization focus for screening success were not supported. However, there was a strong trend (p < .10, accounting for an

additional 6.7% in the variance in screening outcomes) for résumé focus to add to prediction of screening outcome by résumé fit ratings.

The findings of this study do suggest that inferences about an applicant's potential for fit with an organization may be made in résumé screening. This is a difficult task, as résumés tend to focus on job-related biodata.

### CHAPTER 5: Study 3

Study 3 utilized an experimental approach to examine the effects of job-specific fit and organizational fit manipulation on résumé screening outcomes. Such an experimental approach allows control over actual levels of presented applicant-job and applicant-organization congruence, unlike the previous study which dealt only with impressions of such congruence.

In this study, two organizational profiles were created for financial services organizations, along with a single position description for a commercial mortgage analyst (financial analyst) position. Résumés were constructed to vary at two levels (high, low) in potential for job-specific fit as well as in potential for applicant-organization fit, in a 2 x 2 within-subjects design. Résumés high in organizational fit for one of the two organizational profiles were low in applicant-organization fit for the second organizational profile, and vice versa. Thus organizational profile served as a betweensubjects factor, resulting in a 2 x (2 x 2) design. Participants were human resources professionals with experience and/or training in employee selection and actively working in a human resources capacity for Canadian financial services organizations. Participants rated the experimental résumés on likelihood of inviting the applicant portrayed in each résumé for an interview for this position in this organization. Two other rating scales were utilized as manipulation checks, involving ratings of impressions of the applicants' potential for job-specific fit and potential for organizational fit.

Main effects for both within-subjects factors, résumé fit with the position description (potential for job-specific fit) and résumé fit with the organizational profile

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(potential for organizational fit) were expected. Thus, the main hypotheses for this study were as following:

Hypothesis 3a. Regardless of organization type or organizational fit, résumés higher in fit with the position profile will receive higher interview likelihood ratings.

Hypothesis 3b. Regardless of organization type or job-specific fit, résumés higher in fit with the organizational profile utilized will receive higher interview likelihood ratings.

### Method

**Participants.** One hundred thirty-two human resources professionals working in financial services companies in Canada were asked to participate in this study as subject/raters. Their names were obtained from financial services organizations listed in the *Financial Services Canada 1998* directory. Potential participants were initially contacted by telephone, and 50 declined to participate. Research materials were mailed to 82 human resource professionals, and 60 responses were returned. One respondent did not have either experience or training in employee selection and was not included in the sample. Therefore, the effective participation rate (59 of 132) was 44.7 %.

Materials. Eight job applicant résumés were constructed (Appendix H), in which (a) the quality of the applicant was high or low with respect to the position under consideration, and (b) the quality of the applicant was high or low with respect to one of two organizational profiles prepared for this study. The first of the two organizational profiles depicted the organization (ABC Bank of Canada) as team and continuous learning oriented and seeking applicants with an open/flexible career focus. This reflects

an organic organizational structure, according to the organic/mechanistic organizational structure distinction introduced by Burns and Stalker (1961). The second profile described an organization which has standardized its work to the point that work is done relatively independently of the work of others and which seeks individuals with a clear career focus who value becoming a master of a specialty, which is characteristic of a mechanistic organizational structure according to the Burns and Stalker framework (see Appendix I). This was a between-subjects factor. The first of two within-subjects manipulations, related to job-specific fit, involved graduation with a bachelor's degree in business from a more versus less prestigious business school, one year of Dean's List versus no mention of Dean's List, membership in the Marketing Club at their university versus membership in another business club (Management, International Business), and relevant experience in marketing or financial services versus experience in non-financial services or marketing roles. The second manipulation, related to organizational fit, involved the following: evidence of team experience in work and extracurricular résumé aspects versus more emphasis on individual contributor roles and solitary interests (e.g., woodworking, running), evidence of additional coursework or training past the business degree versus not, and a specific and relevant career objective versus an open and general one, representing high and low levels of potential for organizational fit with respect to the Organizational Profile (see Appendix I). Years of work experience, claims of French knowledge, number of extracurricular activities, and graduation from a university degree program in business during the previous year were held constant, as was font, paper and length (one page). A résumé rating instrument (Appendix K) was constructed with three

seven-point Likert scales for ratings of likelihood of inviting the applicant for an interview, impression of potential for job-specific fit, and impression of potential for organizational fit, used by the participants in the rating of each of the eight résumés.

Two pretests were performed on the materials for Study 3 prior to their finalization. Twenty people participated in each pretest. Following each pretest, materials were modified to make the experimental manipulations sufficiently salient and to improve the standardization of the résumés in nonmanipulated aspects. Following the first pretest, the second organizational profile/manipulation was included, requiring a second pretest.

Procedure. The experimental design included two within-subjects factors (jobrelevant qualifications--high, low x applicant-organization fit--high, low) and one between-subjects factor (organic versus mechanistic organizational profile). The 82 financial services human resources professionals who agreed to participate in this experiment were given a copy of a Position Description/Ideal Candidate Profile (see Appendix J) for a commercial mortgage analyst (financial analyst) position suitable as entry level for a graduate of a university business degree program. Participants were also given one of two descriptions of the organization in which the opening existed (Appendix I). Finally, participants received eight résumés to evaluate using the three scales of the résumé rating instrument. (One scale served as the dependent measure, and the other two provided information for manipulation checks.) There were two résumés for each of the job fit - organizational fit level combinations. Each participant was asked to assume the role of a human resources representative with ABC Bank of Canada (see cover/instruction letter, Appendix L) and to evaluate each résumé, indicating on a sevenpoint Likert-type scale the probability that the rater would ask each applicant to come for an interview for the commercial mortgage specialist (financial analyst) position. Participants were also given an Informed Consent form (Appendix M) and a Background Information form (Appendix N) to complete.

Examination of the ratings of initial impression of job-specific fit and initial impression of organizational fit were performed as manipulation checks. A  $2 \times (2 \times 2)$  ANOVA with one between-subjects factor (organization type) and two within-subjects factor (job fit-high versus low, and organizational fit-high versus low) was employed to evaluate Hypotheses 3a and 3b. Main effects for job fit and organizational fit manipulations were predicted by these hypotheses.

### Results

**Participant data.** Table 22 presents background data on the participants in this research study. Each participant had either experience or training in employee selection / résumé screening. 94.92% of participants had experience in résumé screening or employee selection, and experienced participants had an average of 9.17 years of experience in these functions (10.35 years in the mechanistic organizational group and 8.03 in the organic organizational group). The difference between these mean years of experience was not significant (t (57) = 1.12, *n.s.*). As can be seen from the data in Table 22, these background statistics indicate that the participants in the mechanistic organizational group were somewhat more likely to have experience in employee selection/résumé screening (100% versus 90%), to have training in employee

## Table 22.

# Descriptive Background Information on Study 3 Participants.

Type of	Experience in	Ye	ars in	Training in	Commercial
Organization	selection/screening	selection	n/screening	selection/screening	mortgages
Mechanistic		<u>M</u>	10.35 ª		
Organization	100.00% ª	<u>SD</u>	8.77 ª	79.30% ª	75.90% °
Organic		M	8.03 <sup>b</sup>		
Organization	90.00% <sup>b</sup>	<u>SD</u>	7.03 <sup>b</sup>	72.40% <sup>c</sup>	70.00% <sup>b</sup>
Overall	94.92% <sup>d</sup>	<u>M</u>	9.17 <sup>d</sup>	75.86% <sup>e</sup>	72.88% <sup>d</sup>
		<u>SD</u>	7.95 <sup>d</sup>		

<sup>a</sup><u>n</u> = 28; <sup>b</sup><u>n</u> = 30; <sup>c</sup><u>n</u> = 29; <sup>d</sup><u>n</u> = 59; <sup>c</sup><u>n</u> = 58

selection/résumé screening (79.3% versus 72.4%), and to come from organizations that offer commercial mortgages (75.9% versus 70%) than was the case for participants in the organic organizational group.

Manipulation checks. Ratings of potential for job-specific fit and potential for applicant-organization fit were obtained as checks on the experimental résumé manipulations. Ratings data for impressions of potential for job-specific fit may be found in Table 23. (Estimated marginal means are being reported rather than the arithmetic means and standard deviations, because these were analyzed in the ANOVA due to the unequal cell sizes. This is the case for both manipulation check ANOVAs, as well as for the ANOVA with respect to hypothesized differences in interview likelihood ratings.) The pattern of estimated marginal means shows that potential for job fit ratings are roughly at the same level for high job fit-high organizational fit and high job fit-low organizational fit cells for each organization, followed in magnitude from the low job fithigh organizational fit cells. Standard errors of the mean for potential for job fit ratings are low overall, but are slightly higher for the mechanistic organization.

Table 24 presents the estimated marginal means and standard errors for the ratings of impressions of potential for organizational fit. Inspection of these data reveals that the means range from lows in the low job fit-low organizational fit cells, to higher levels in the low job fit-high organizational fit cells, to higher levels in the high job fit-low organizational fit cells, to their highest levels in the high job fit-high organizational

Table 23.

# Estimated Marginal Means and Standard Errors for Ratings of Impressions of Potential for Applicant-Job Fit, Study 3.

			Mecha	nistic O	rganization	Organic Organization			Combined Organizations		
				Job	<u>Fit</u>		Job F	<u>it</u>	l	Job	<u>Fit</u>
			High	Low	Combined	High	Low	Combined	High	Low	Combined
	High	Est. Marginal Mean	5.00ª	3.46ª	4.23ª	4.97⁵	3.27 <sup>⊾</sup>	4.10 <sup>b</sup>	4.98°	3.36°	4.17°
	111811	Standard Error	0.19ª	0.22ª	0.18ª	0.18 <sup>b</sup>	0.22	0.15 <sup>b</sup>	0.13°	0.15°	0.13°
Organizational Fit	Low	Est. Marginal Mean	4.90ª	2.68ª	3.79ª	4.93⁵	3.26 <sup>b</sup>	4.12 <sup>b</sup>	4.92°	2.97°	3.94°
Organizational Pit	Low	Standard Error	0.20ª	0.18ª	0.16ª	0.20 <sup>b</sup>	0.18 <sup>b</sup>	0.18 <sup>b</sup>	0.14°	0.13°	0.11°
	Combined	Est. Marginal Mean	4.95*	3.07ª	4.01ª	4.95⁵	3.26 <sup>b</sup>	4.11 <sup>b</sup>	4.95°	3.17°	4.06°
	Comonieu	Standard Error	0.15ª	0.17ª	0.14 <sup>u</sup>	0.15 <sup>b</sup>	0.17 <sup>b</sup>	0.14 <sup>b</sup>	0.11°	0.12°	0.10°

<sup>a</sup><u>n</u> = 29, <sup>b</sup><u>n</u> = 30, <sup>c</sup><u>n</u> = 59

Table 24.

### Estimated Marginal Means and Standard Errors for Ratings of Impressions of Potential for Applicant-Organizational Fit, Study 3.

			Mechar	nistic O	rganization	Organ	nic Org	anization	Comb	ined Org	anizations
				Job	<u>Fit</u>		Job	<u>Fit</u>		Job I	<u> <sup>2</sup>11</u>
			High	Low	Combined	High	Low	Combined	High	Low	Combined
	High	Est. Marginal Mean	5.12ª	3.84ª	4.48ª	5.45 <sup>b</sup>	4.88 <sup>b</sup>	5.17 <sup>b</sup>	5.28°	4.36°	4.82°
		Standard Error	0.20ª	0.21ª	0.18ª	0.20 <sup>b</sup>	0.20 <sup>b</sup>	0.18 <sup>b</sup>	0.14°	0.15°	0.13°
		Est. Marginal Mean	4.82ª	3.06ª	3.94ª	4.27 <sup>b</sup>	3.49⁵	3.88⁵	4.54°	3.28°	3.91°
Organizational Fit	Low	Standard Error	0.20ª	0.2 <i>1</i> ª	0.17ª	0.20 <sup>b</sup>	0.21 <sup>b</sup>	0.17*	0.14°	0.15°	0.12°
		Est. Marginal Mean	4.97ª	3.45ª	4.21ª	4.86 <sup>b</sup>	4.19 <sup>b</sup>	4.52 <sup>⊾</sup>	4.91°	3.82°	4.37°
	Combined	Standard Error	0.16ª	0.17ª	0.14ª	0.15 <sup>b</sup>	0.17	0.14 <sup>b</sup>	0.11°	0.12°	0.10
							···		l		

<sup>a</sup> <u>n</u> = 29, <sup>b</sup> <u>n</u> = 30, <sup>c</sup> <u>n</u> = 59

fit cells. Standard errors again are low, roughly equivalent to the standard errors found for the potential for job fit ratings. For the manipulation check of ratings of potential for job-specific fit, the ANOVA resulted in a significant main effect for the job fit manipulation [F(1,57) = 214.43, p < .001]. The nature of this effect was that résumés constructed to represent higher levels of fit with the position description indeed were rated as representing higher potential for job-specific fit, as intended. No other significant effects were obtained in this analysis.

An ANOVA was performed on the organizational fit ratings as a check on the adequacy of the organizational fit résumé manipulation. Significant main effects were obtained for the job fit manipulation [F(1,57) = 93.78, p < .001] as well as for the organizational fit manipulation [F(1,57) = 39.38, p < .001]. These effects reflected higher potential for organizational fit ratings for the high job fit résumés, as compared to the low job fit résumés, and likewise for the high versus low organizational fit résumés.

The interaction of job fit level and organizational type was statistically significant for the potential for organizational fit ratings [F(1,57) = 14.12, p < .001]. Tukey-Kramer HSD follow up tests indicated that this interaction involved a pattern of equivalent estimated marginal means for high and low job fit résumés at high levels of job fit, higher means for the high job fit résumés than for the low job fit résumés regardless of organization type, and higher ratings for low job fit résumé in the organic organization than in the mechanistic organization (see Table 24).

In addition, the interaction of organizational fit level and organization type was significant in the ANOVA on organizational fit ratings. Tukey-Kramer HSD follow up tests determined that the potential for organizational fit ratings were significantly greater for the high organizational fit résumés for the organic organization than they were for each of the three other organizational fit - organization type cells (high organizational fit/mechanistic organization, low organizational fit/organic organization, and low organizational fit/mechanistic organization). No other comparisons achieved statistical significance.

In summary, the above findings indicate that the experimental manipulations worked as intended in the present study. This was demonstrated by a significant main effect for the job fit manipulation in the ANOVA on potential for job fit ratings, and by a significant main effect for the organizational fit manipulation in the ANOVA on potential for organizational fit ratings.

Ratings of interview likelihood. Estimated marginal means for the résumé ratings of interview likelihood may be found in Table 25, grouped by job-specific fit and organizational fit level and nature of the target organization. As can be seen from examination of these results, mean ratings range from lows of 2.81 to 3.45 for low job fit, low organizational fit cells for mechanistic and organic organization categories, to highs of 5.43 to 5.62 for high job fit, high organizational fit cells for these organizational categories. Intermediate rating levels were evidenced by low job fit, high organizational fit résumés and high job fit, low organizational fit résumés. It should be noted that the pattern of means is identical for the two organizational profile groups, ranging from a low

Table 25.

2 DXC -EALC **Estimated Marginal Means and Standard Errors for Interview Likelihood Rating** 

			Mecha	nistic Or	Mechanistic Organization	Orgai	Organic Organization	nization	Combi	ned Org	Combined Organizations
			High	1	<u>Job Fit</u> Low Combined	High	<u>Job Fit</u> Low	<u>It</u> Combined	High	<u>Job Fit</u> Low C	<u>Job Fit</u> High Low Combined
	High	Est. Marginal Mean	5.43ª	3.72ª	4.58ª	5.62 <sup>b</sup>	5.62 <sup>b</sup> 4.05 <sup>b</sup>	4.83 <sup>b</sup>	5.52°	3.89°	4.71°
	)	Standard Error	0.23ª	0.26"	0.22"	0.23 <sup>b</sup>	0.26 <sup>b</sup>	0.22 <sup>b</sup>	0.16°	0,18	0,16
Organizational Fit	Low	Est. Marginal Mean	5.29ª	2.81ª	4.05ª	5.17 <sup>b</sup>	3.45 <sup>b</sup>	4.31 <sup>b</sup>	5.23	3.13°	4.18°
		Standard Error	0.23ª	0.22ª	0.18	0.23 <sup>h</sup>	0.22 b	0.18 b	0.16°	0.16°	0.13
	Combined	Est. Marginal Mean	5.36 <sup>a</sup>	3.27ª	4.32ª	5.39 <sup>b</sup>	3.75 <sup>b</sup>	4.57 b	5.38°	3.51°	4,44°
		Standard Error	0,18ª	0.21ª	0.17"	0.18 0.20 0	0.20 <sup> b</sup>	0.16 b	0.13	0.15	0.12

 $6S = \overline{U} + 30$ ;  $C = \overline{U} + 30$ ;  $C = \overline{U} + 30$ =!

in low job fit, low organizational fit cells, to low job fit, high organizational fit cells, to high job fit, low organizational fit cells, to their highest levels in high job fit, high organizational fit cells. Mean ratings tend to be at roughly the same level for the two organizational types in the various cells of the résumé manipulations. Standard errors tend to be low overall but slightly higher for the mechanistic organizational profile than for the organic organizational profile.

An ANOVA was performed on the interview likelihood ratings data. This included one between-subjects factor (organizational profile-mechanistic versus organic) and two within-subjects factors (higher versus lower levels of applicant-job fit and higher versus lower levels of applicant-organization fit). Table 26 summarizes the results of this analysis, which revealed a main effects for job fit and organizational fit manipulations in the interview likelihood ratings. Each of these main effects reflected higher ratings for high fit levels than for low fit levels in the résumés. The effect size for the job fit manipulation ( $\epsilon^2 = .75$ ) was greater than that for the organizational fit manipulation ( $\epsilon^2 =$ .17). The between subjects effect of organizational type was not statistically significant. The job fit x organizational fit interaction was found to be significant. No other interactions were found to be significant in this analysis.

The job fit x organizational fit interaction demonstrated that the organizational fit manipulation resulted in significantly greater interview likelihood ratings at low levels of job fit. However, this was not the case at high levels of job fit, where the organizational fit differences failed to achieve statistical significance. Table 26.

### Analysis of Variance for Interview Likelihood Ratings following Résumé Screening,

Study 3.

Source	<u>df</u>	Ē
Be	etween subjects	
Organizational profile	1	1.20
S within-group error	57	(3.24)
V	Vithin subjects	
Job Fit Ratings	1	174.79**
Organizational Fit Ratings	1	16.28**
Error (Job Fit)	57	(1.44)
Job Fit x Organizational Fit Ratings	1	4.42*
Error (Job Fit x Organizational Fit)	57	(0.71)
Job Fit Ratings x Organizational Profile	1	2.57
Pooled Error (Organizational Profile x <u>S</u> within-group)	94	(2.21)
Organizational Fit Ratings x Organizational Profile	1	0.00
Pooled Error (Organizational Profile x <u>S</u> within-group)	99	(2.34)
Job Fit Ratings x Organizational Fit Ratings x Organizational Profile	1	1.44
Pooled Error (Organizational Profile x S within-groups)	81	(1.98)

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

\* <u>p</u> < .05

\*\* <u>p</u> < .001

Given Barr and Hitt's (1986) findings of differences in employability ratings with raters who were experienced versus inexperienced in employee selection, it may be interesting to determine if years of participant experience in employee selection was a factor in the results of the present study. However, the study's hypotheses dealt only with the within-subjects effects in the experimental design, which would not be impacted by the addition of a covariate (Kirk, 1995). Including a covariate of years of rater/participant experience would not impact the findings of the present study, as each within-subjects manipulation was experienced by each rater in the study. Thus an ANCOVA would not be appropriate in the present situation.

### Discussion

Each hypothesis was confirmed by the results of this study. Hypotheses 3a and 3b concerned the impact of higher résumé-job congruence and résumé-organization congruence on ratings of interview likelihood, and each of these predicted main effects was found. The obtained main effect of applicant résumé-position profile congruence (signifying a higher level of actual résumé-job fit) on ratings of interview likelihood was anticipated based on previous research by Rasmussen (1984) and (to an extent) by Gilmore and Ferris (1989a). Such an effect would be predicted by traditional task-oriented approaches to employee selection (see Borman et al., 1997).

The impact of applicant résumé-organizational profile congruence on ratings of the likelihood of inviting an applicant for an interview represents a new contribution to research on résumé screening. That such a main effect occurred apart from any impact of organizational type indicates that applicant-organization fit was important regardless of whether the target organization was depicted as having a mechanistic or an organic structure.

This pattern of findings would not be predicted by Borman et al.'s (1997) conjecture that P-O fit takes on increased importance in organic organizations, which require employee flexibility and adaptability to a series of new jobs / projects. The failure to find either a main effect for organizational profile or an organizational fit manipulation x organizational profile interaction in interview likelihood ratings indicates that the main effect of organizational fit is unlikely to have resulted from impressions of general employability as opposed to those of applicant-organization fit, as a given résumé was either high or low in résumé-organizational congruence depending on which organizational profile was used. General employability by definition is not organizationspecific, and thus the pattern of results obtained with respect to interview likelihood ratings do not support a general employability interpretation. This finding is contrary to those of Bretz el al. (1993) and Adkins et al. (1994) from interview research. Whereas these studies found that impressions of P-O fit were largely comprised of impressions of general employability (and, in the case of Bretz et al., job-specific fit), the design of the present study rules out general employability as an interpretation of the results. However, the present findings are consistent with the results of Rynes and Gerhart's (1990) interview study, which found that recruiters pointed to interpersonal skills, future goal orientation, and physical attractiveness as indicators of applicant fit (firm-specific employability) when general employability was held constant.

The résumé manipulations of applicant-job congruence and applicantorganization congruence worked as intended in this study. These findings demonstrate that actual levels of résumé-job and résumé-organization congruence fostered corresponding impressions of potential for applicant-job and applicant-organization fit. However, résumé-job and résumé-organization congruence each interacted with organization type for ratings of impressions of potential for applicant-organization fit. Coupled with the finding of a significant main effect of the applicant-job fit résumé manipulation for ratings of organizational fit, it appears that organizational fit ratings were dependent upon level of presented job fit as well as presented organizational fit. That actual job fit level influenced impressions of organizational fit points to the high salience of job fit in résumé screening impressions. This finding is consistent with the interview-related findings of Bretz et al. (1993), in which impressions of P-O fit stemmed from perceptions of job-specific fit as well as from impressions of general employability. The impact of organizational fit manipulations was not nearly as strong (effect size of .17) or as far-reaching as that of job fit manipulations (effect size .74). In the potential for job-specific fit ratings, the organizational fit manipulation did not impact results in a significant fashion, as neither a main effect of the organizational fit manipulation nor a job-specific fit x organizational fit interaction were obtained.

Whereas the manipulation checks provided confirmation of the effectiveness of the experimental manipulations in constructing the résumés utilized in this study, it is important to note that asking participants to rate the potential for job and organizational fit represented by each résumé could have focused the study participants on these considerations, thereby increasing the salience of these factors in the interview likelihood ratings. To minimize this potential impact, the interview likelihood rating scale appeared before impression of potential for job fit and impression of potential for organizational fit rating scales. However, over the course of the experimental ratings task for the eight résumés presented to participants in this study, repeated ratings of potential for job-specific fit and of organizational fit could have affected the impact of the job fit and organizational fit manipulations in the résumés on the screening outcomes. Schwarz (1999) has presented cogent arguments and data about the ways in which questionnaire design can shape responses. It may be worthwhile to conduct a study similar to the present one, with the manipulation checks performed as pretests rather than as part of the experimental task.

### CHAPTER 6: General Discussion

The primary aim of this program of research was to demonstrate that, whereas job-specific fit considerations are important in résumé screening outcomes, organizational fit aspects are also important in such outcomes. The expected importance of job-specific fit considerations in résumé screening was based on traditional approaches to employee selection (see Borman et al., 1997), although the limited research relevant to résumé screening is only partially supportive of this prediction (Gilmore & Ferris, 1989a; Rasmussen, 1984). Hypotheses related to the importance of impressions of and actual applicant-organization fit in résumé screening outcomes were based upon predictions of Schneider's ASA framework (Schneider, 1987; Schneider et al., 1995), which has spurred increased interest in this issue (see Arvey & Murphy, 1998; Borman et al., 1997; Kristof, 1996).

This objective was achieved in each study of this research program, which involved survey, archival research, and experimental approaches to examine these issues of applicant fit considerations in résumé screening decisions. Each hypothesis generated in the three studies within this research project was confirmed, with a few relatively minor exceptions.

Applicant-organization fit was *perceived* by human resources professionals to be extremely important in hiring. It was also an important consideration in actual résumé screening *decisions*, as both perceived and actual differences in presented applicantorganization fit were directly related to résumé screening success. That this occurred in a reanalysis of successful and unsuccessful résumés from an actual selection situation, as well as in an experiment in which résumés were constructed to differ in actual P-O congruence, provides strong support for the importance of P-O fit, even in the preliminary stages of applicant screening for employment. Although predicted, these findings with respect to the importance of P-O fit in résumé screening are contrary to contentions of Borman et al. (1997), who argued that the interview stage of employee selection is the venue in which P-O fit considerations emerge.

Predictions of the ASA framework (Schneider, 1987; Schneider et al., 1995) were confirmed repeatedly in each of the present research studies. The ASA model argues that applicant congruence with organization's culture, values, needs, and opportunities will affect their attraction, selection, and retention by an organization. The findings reported herein support the importance of these considerations for applicant selection, even in the early stage of selection at which résumé screening occurs, for a broad array of job categories from entry-level and support roles to those of professional and manager. It appears that P-O fit may interact with P-J fit, in addition to having a main effect on screening decisions (e.g., interview likelihood ratings).

Résumé screening involves impression formation. Although the present research did not test specific predictions of impression formation theories, the data from these studies does appear to be consistent with the formation of category-based impressions in this process.

In the first study, human resources professionals rated various aspects of P-O fit, important considerations in the ASA framework, on their importance in hiring. These self-reports consistently affirmed the high level of perceived importance of each aspect of P-O fit, for each of five broad job categories, as would be predicted by the ASA framework, with only two minor exceptions. Human resources professionals also indicated which aspects of résumé information help most to establish P-O fit, and these responses provide clues to specific biodata aspects that promote the *impressions* of P-O fit predicted by the ASA model to be important for applicant selection. However, self-reports about practice have been found to be incomplete as indicators of how selection criteria are applied in actual practice (Graves & Karren, 1992). The second and third studies provided demonstrations of the selection predictions of the ASA model in actual and simulated résumé screening decisions, which adds considerable credibility to the findings of the first study, in contrast to the findings of Graves and Karren.

In the second study, examination of résumés used in an actual employee selection confirmed the prediction that résumés that received successful screening outcomes had significantly higher levels of P-J and P-O fit. Thus the self-reports of human resources professionals about the importance of P-O fit considerations in hiring were found to be the case in actual practice, providing further support for the operation of ASA processes in résumé screening practice. Finally, the experiment conducted in the third study demonstrated that actual differences in P-J congruence and P-O congruence were reflected in human resources professionals' ratings of their impressions of such congruence. In addition, such P-J and P-O congruence differences were reflected in ratings of the likelihood of inviting applicants depicted in the résumés for interviews. Therefore, predictions of the ASA framework with respect to the importance of applicant-organization congruence in résumé screening were also supported by the findings of this experiment.

Differences in the importance of the organizational congruence aspects predicted to be important in the ASA framework were found in the present research. Skills-based aspects and résumé indicators of fit were regarded as most important overall, consistent with a traditional task oriented approach to employee selection (Borman et al., 1997) and the findings of Bretz et al. (1993). However, each of the other aspects of P-O fit surveyed were also rated as highly important, with the exception of the experience-based industry fit category for the two entry-level position categories. The current findings also indicated that human resources professionals discriminated among aspects of applicantorganizational fit, and that they valued them differentially for specific categories of job positions. In addition, they rated a given applicant résumé differently for interview likelihood depending on which of two opposite (with respect to manipulated organizational fit aspects) organizational profiles was used., as evidenced by a main effect for résumé-organization congruence. This provided a strong demonstration of the importance of applicant-organization fit. The present research project represents the first examination of the importance of various P-O fit aspects in selection. It would be worthwhile to investigate the relative effectiveness of various kinds of P-O fit manipulations in résumé self-presentations in the future.

The current findings also indicate that the trend in the selection research literature of operationalizing applicant-organization fit solely in terms of values congruence (Adkins & Werbel, 1994; Cable & Judge, 1997; Rynes & Gerhart, 1990) does capture an aspect of P-O congruence that is important to human resources professionals. The results in the present research did affirm the importance of values congruence for establishing applicant-organization fit in employment selection. This is in line with findings by Cable and Judge (1997) and Rynes and Gerhart (1990) in interview research, but at odds with the results of Bretz et al. (1993) and Adkins et al. (1994). In the present research, values congruence was rated as first or second in importance among the five P-O fit aspects for each of the job categories examined in the first study. However, ratings of the importance of various aspects of applicantorganization fit in selection, greater than the scale midpoint for all but two of the aspects of applicant-organization fit for each of the various job position categories, point to the multidimensionality of applicant-organization fit in the minds of human resources professionals. These findings support the multidimensional approach to P-O fit advanced in the Kristof (1996) model.

Job fit considerations had a stronger effect on screening outcomes than did those related to organizational fit in the third study, as anticipated. This phenomenon mirrors survey ratings in the first study that reflected somewhat stronger interest in skills-based and job-related aspects and résumé indicators of P-O fit, in support of the findings of Bretz et al. (1993). However, in each of the present studies, impressions of applicantorganization fit did have an important relationship with résumé screening outcomes, as found previously in interview settings by Cable and Judge (1997) for applicantorganization values congruence. Survey results indicated that skills-based aspects of P-O fit were rated as the singularly most important aspects and résumé indicators of applicantorganization fit for positions below the manager level, whereas other aspects (e.g., values congruence) and indicators of P-O fit shared the role of primary importance for management ranks. This finding, coupled with the greater rated importance of P-O fit aspects and rated usefulness of résumé indicators of P-O fit for manager and professional positions, is confirmation of the conjecture that P-O fit is most important for those roles which are less prescribed by rules and supervision, and which involve broader interaction, judgment, and discretion.

In the second study of the current research program, the strength of the relationship of résumé P-O fit ratings with screening outcome was as strong as the résumé P-J fit ratings - screening outcome relationship. There was a very high degree of overlap between the job fit and organizational fit ratings, as was found previously in college recruiting interviews by Adkins et al. (1994) for correlations between general employability ratings and assessment of applicant-organization values congruence. The P-O fit and P-J fit ratings accounted for virtually identical variance in the screening outcome criteria. In addition, the P-O fit manipulation check ANOVA in the third study found that P-O fit differences as well as P-J fit differences in the résumé led to significant differences in P-O fit ratings. On the surface, these findings seem to indicate that the distinction between résumé P-O fit and P-J fit is not a strong one for human resources professionals, although job fit manipulation check in Study 3 did not demonstrate an influence of organizational fit differences in the applicant-job ratings. However, hierarchical analyses in Study 2 demonstrated that human resources professionals may indeed distinguish between P-J and P-O fit in terms of screening decisions, but that these

two factors interact, such that the benefit of P-O fit is greatest at higher levels of P-J fit. This would indicate that recruiters may still weight P-J fit more heavily overall, considering P-O fit when a sufficient level of P-J fit seems to be present.

Perhaps these findings indicate that Borman and Motowidlo's (1993) urging, to expand the work performance criteria domain to incorporate contextual (organizationally relevant) as well as task-relevant considerations, has been heeded, although P-J fit seems to be a primary consideration. It may be that the P-J fit / P-O fit distinction will become less important over time, as organizational-level outcomes become as integral to our notion of work performance as job-specific outcomes. On the other hand, assessment of applicants for employment may be more precise if component aspects and indicators of each type of person-environment fit are delineated. The present findings have only scratched the surface of this complex issue.

The credibility of the findings in this research program was enhanced by the use of actively employed human resources professionals who were knowledgeable about employee selection, which serves to provide a higher level of external validity for the findings of these studies. This corresponds with a trend in the literature on P-O fit in selection research, toward the use of professional samples (Adkins et al., 1994; Rynes & Gerhart, 1990; Bretz et al., 1993; Cable & Judge, 1997; Rynes & Gerhart, 1990). In addition, the measures obtained in the present studies involved evaluating the importance of résumé information in terms of interview intentions, potential for job fit, and/or potential for organizational fit. These obviously are critical outcome measures in the résumé screening phase of employee selection. As discussed in the introduction, the limited research that exists on résumé screening-related effects has been somewhat shy about looking at outcomes, focusing instead on impressions of an applicant's personal characteristics. Finally, in the second study of the present research project, an actual résumé screening process was examined. The study of an actual selection process presents a test situation with a high level of external validity.

In terms of the ability of human resources professionals to discern differences in applicant-organization and applicant-job congruence, on the whole the news was positive. Participants reported substantial use of specific résumé rating scales (38.1%, Study 1), and that such scales are highly likely to include categories related to applicantorganization fit (77.1%, Study 1). The human resources professionals who participated in this research rated applicant-job and applicant-organization congruence constructs in a reliable fashion (Study 2), although there was a very high degree of overlap in these ratings. Their résumé ratings of impressions for potential for applicant-job fit and for applicant-organization fit reflected actual résumé differences in these constructs (Study 3). In addition, a given résumé tended to be rated higher or lower in potential for P-O fit depending on which of two organizational profiles was utilized, with résumés constructed to be high in P-O fit for one organizational profile but lower in P-O fit for the second one. However, the research participants did tend to ascribe P-O fit in the absence of actual differences in P-O congruence for applicants with higher levels of actual résumé-job congruence (Study 3), and ratings of potential for P-J fit and of potential for P-O fit showed an extremely high level of overlap, especially with respect to prediction of résumé screening decisions (Study 2).

The hypotheses about the association of résumé-job focus and résuméorganization focus, on the one hand, and a résumé's success in a résumé screening for an actual selection situation, on the other, were not confirmed. This appears to have been due to the interactive effect that focus exhibited with fit, as demonstrated in a hierarchical multiple regression, rather than due to lack of clarity about the distinction between focus and fit in the minds of the raters, or to the relatively small number of résumés involved in the analyses (18 in each of two groups in a one-way MANOVA with four rating measures). Résumé P-O focus was rated as important to survey participants in the first study, and the mean ratings of résumé-job and résumé-organization focus for successful and unsuccessful résumés in the second study did demonstrate a consistent trend in the predicted direction.

In addition, when cover letter ratings were used in a second MANOVA for this same study, significant results were not obtained for any of the measures. As mentioned above, this may have been due to the small *N* and limited power involved in this study, as argued for the résumé focus ratings, since mean ratings of successful and unsuccessful applicant cover letters consistently were in the predicted direction. Other conjectures are that this nonsignificant outcome was due to greater emphasis on the résumé in the original applicant screening decisions or to the greater variability that was exhibited in combined résumé – cover letter ratings.

One must bear in mind that the research findings in this second study were based on a single employee selection situation. Although access to actual selection pools and screening decisions can be difficult to obtain, further research on the issue of focus, involving broader sampling of selection assignments, may serve to heighten the power of tests of difference as well as the generalizability of the findings. In the light of the survey findings with respect to position category, it would be meaningful to examine P-O and P-J focus for experienced professional and manager roles. These roles were hypothesized to be ones in which P-O focus would be more important, as they are less constrained by procedural guidelines and close supervision. This hypothesis was confirmed repeatedly in the survey responses in Study 1. It thus seems worthwhile to pursue research into the role of P-O fit and focus considerations in employee selection for the job categories in which such considerations are perceived to be most important, at the professional and manager levels, particularly at the résumé screening stage that was the focus of the present research program.

### Limitations in the Current Research

At least two limitations in the present research program should be discussed. One, as pointed out for the first study, involves the use of a closed-ended response format in the Résumé Screening Practices Survey. Schwarz (1999) has discussed the differences in results obtained with questions utilizing open-ended response formats, as compared with closed response formats. The latter could predispose survey respondents to answer that a given aspect of P-O fit is important in hiring, or that a given type of résumé information is useful in establishing an applicant's fit with the hiring organization, whereas such aspects or categories may be less likely to be listed to in response to openended questions about the aspects of P-O fit most important in hiring, or about the types of résumé information most useful in establishing applicant-organization fit. In addition, repeated ratings of potential for applicant-job and applicant-organization fit, done as manipulation checks in the third study, could have predisposed study participants to these considerations when completing the interview likelihood ratings. To minimize such impact, manipulation check ratings were presented after the interview likelihood ratings. However, in future research, it may be worthwhile to conduct the manipulation checks with a subset or separate group of participants.

### **Future Research**

Many possibilities exist for future investigation into the issues addressed in this research project. Since it appears that there are several dimensions of applicantorganization fit important in hiring, research into the nature and relative importance of these dimensions in selection impressions and decisions seems warranted. Investigation into the impact on impression formation of various kinds of realistic and skillful impression management tactics in job applicant résumé and interview presentations would provide important information for people sitting on both sides of the hiring desk. It would also be interesting to compare P-O fit impressions gained from résumé screening and interview settings. Finally, research into the role of P-J and P-O considerations in the selection decisions of hiring (functional) managers, as opposed to human resources professionals, would also be meaningful.

Demonstrations of the predictive validity of various P-O fit predictors in effective selection decisions would call for the investigation into predictors of actual post-hire P-O fit and contextual performance. This information could guide the development of effective, standardized résumé rating scales, providing valid prediction of

an applicant's potential for post-hire P-O fit and effectiveness. Finding valid predictors of post-hire P-O fit is especially important, given the relatively high percentage of human resources professionals in the present research who reported the use of specific résumé rating scales that include measures of an applicant's potential for organizational fit. With the advent of electronic résumé submission and scanning technologies, it is becoming increasingly likely that organizations would benefit from research into meaningful biodata predictors of applicant-organization fit in résumé submissions. Predictors that can be utilized to guide standardized or electronic résumé screening instruments are likely to be welcomed by organizations. Perhaps they could be used in the construction of electronic application forms, in a modernized version of the weighted application blank. An advantage to the growing use of such electronic application forms is that they standardize the applicants' self-presentations and thus enhance reliability in the screening of initial applicant submissions for employment. This is likely to be particularly important for major search firms. Hal Johnson (1999) recently remarked that Korn Ferry's New York office received 25,000 unsolicited résumés per month. Development of valid biodata predictors of P-O fit at the upper organizational levels at which firms like Korn Ferry conduct executive searches is likely to provide significant selection utility for major search firms and highly desirable employers.

### **Implications of the Present Research Findings**

For human resources professionals involved in employee selection, the findings in this research project shed some light on the complexity of impressions and inferences involved in résumé screening. Discerning P-O fit from a résumé is a difficult task, yet it appears that résumé differences in P-O congruence are detected (even though P-J fit differences also were interpreted as reflective of P-O fit differences and Study 2 revealed considerable overlap between P-J fit and P-O fit ratings). Given that P-O fit assessments seem to be made in résumé screening, it may be wise to guide or structure such assessments through greater use of résumé rating scales that include scales relevant to important aspects of applicant-organization fit. Structured résumé rating instruments may serve to improve résumé screening validity in a manner similar to that involved in the increased validity gained through the use of structured interview techniques (e.g., Janz, 1989; Campion et al., 1988; Schmidt & Rader, 1999).

For job seekers, the findings of the present research program highlight the importance of emphasizing key aspects of one's fit with the target organization in the résumé. This requires research into an organization's culture, structure, values, goals, opportunities, strategies, founder, etc. It also requires skill and effort in translating the resulting information into organizationally relevant categories, as well as in determining relevant aspects of one's background, goals, and successes. It seems clear that tactics related solely to cover letter and interview presentations will miss valuable impression management opportunities that are available in the résumé screening stage of selection.

It appears from the present findings that investigation into the role of applicant résumé focus on P-O fit for résumé screening decisions may require a sufficiently large applicant pool, particularly in terms of numbers of applicants with successful screening outcomes. A trend for job and organizational focus in a résumé to add to the prediction of résumé screening outcome by P-O fit and P-J fit ratings was found in the second study of this research program. It does seem that applicant-organization fit and applicantorganization focus can be evaluated reliably in résumé screening.

At a basic level, the research reported herein yields important information about résumé screening processes and outcomes, so limited in previous research. It also contributes to the small but growing body of research on the importance of organizational fit impressions in employee selection, providing the first such demonstration of this importance and test of the ASA framework in a résumé screening setting.

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### Appendix A

# RESUME SCREENING PRACTICES SURVEY

Thank you for taking some of your valuable time to complete this brief survey. Please answer each question to the best of your knowledge. Your responses will be handled in the strictest of confidence. Demographic information about you and your organization will be used only to build an aggregate profile of the human resources professionals who participate in this survey.

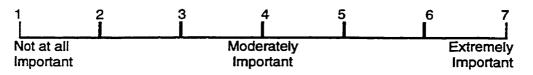
### A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### About you

1.	Number of years of involvement in employee selection				
2.	Have you had formal t	raining in employee select	ion? 🗆 Yes 🗆 No		
Ab	out your company/or	ganization			
1.	Number of employees	in Canada:			
2.	Scope of operations:	multinational  na  local	ational 🗆 regional		
3.	Type of industry	(Please check only one	)		
	□ Agriculture & Fishing	□ Association/Not-for-profit	Communications & Publishing		
	Construction	Education	Electronics/High Tech		
	□ Financial Services	Forest Products	Hospitality &		
			Entertainment		
	Health Care	Import &/or Export	□ Mining, Smelting &/or		
			Petroleum		
	Manufacturing	Professional Services	Public Administration		
	Real Estate	Retail	□ Transportation		
	Utilities	U Wholesale, Distribution	Other		

### **B. SURVEY QUESTIONS**

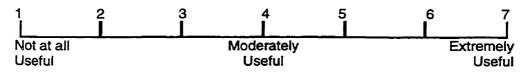
Please use the following scale for question 1. If one of these ratings is not applicable in your situation, please indicate so by "N/A".



1. In the hiring process in general, for each of the following types of positions, please rate how important each of the aspects of organizational fit is to you.

	Types of Positions				
Aspect of Organizational Fit	Experienced technical support	entry- ievel univ. grad	entry- level MBA	experienced professional	manager
Fit between applicant personality and organizational culture.					
Fit between applicant values and organizational values.					
Fit between applicant goals and organizational opportunities to meet those goals					
Fit between applicant skills and organizational needs/requirements					
Fit between previous industry experience and this industry					

**Please use the following scale for questions 2 and 3.** If one of these ratings is not applicable in your situation, please indicate so by "N/A".



2. **Beyond consideration of job-specific skill fit**, for each of the following types of positions, please rate the extent to which a resume that is highly specific and focused on aspects relevant to your organization's culture and values helps you in establishing an applicant's fit with your organization?

Experienced technical support	Experienced professional	
Entry-level university graduate	Experienced manager	
Entry-level MBA		

3. For each of the following types of positions, please indicate how useful each of the following categories of applicant resume information is to you in determining fit with your organization.

	Types of Positions				
Resume Information	experi- enced technical support	entry- level univ. grad	entry- level MBA	experi- enced profes- sional	manager
Job-related skills and competencies					
Leadership experience					
Team orientation					
Interest in learning					
Collaborative approach					
Customer service orientation					
Experience in a stressful environment					
Career goals					
Range of interests					
Adaptability to change					
Personal impact on results					
Attention to detail					
Energy					
Experience in analysis and planning					
Accountability					
Other:					

4. Do you use specific rating scales to evaluate resumes? 
 Yes No

If yes, are there any categories in these scales that represent fit with your organization's culture and values?

5. Your comments on this survey, specific questions, or other information you believe to be relevant to resume screening or aspects of fit with your organization would be appreciated.

Thank you for your participation in this research effort.

#### Appendix B

### **Telephone Script - Recruitment For Survey Participation, Study 1**

Telephone calls to individuals on the mailing list of the sponsoring outplacement consulting office were be made by the principal researcher and a research assistant. To be solicited for participation, an individual's title had to signify a human resources role. Participant recruitment calls were to be made until surveys were returned from at least 80 individuals with either experience or training in employee selection. The following script was used in making these calls, with deviations as necessary to answer the prospect's questions in an ethical and noncoercive manner.

Researcher/Asst.: Hello, is this < name > ? ... This is < name of researcher/asst.> from Murray Axmith and Associates in London, Ontario. The purpose of my call to you today is to ask if you would be willing to complete a brief mail-in survey on resume screening practices that you use in employee selection. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time, and a summary and description of the survey results will be sent to those who participate in the survey. The survey is part of the research that <Iam/Kathleen Dindoff is> conducting for <my/her> doctoral dissertation, under the supervision of Dr. Mitch Rothstein of the Ivey School of Business. Dr. Rothstein is an Organizational Behaviour researcher who teaches Career Management courses to M.B.A. and H.B.A. students. Would you be willing to participate in this research survey?

*If no:* Thank you very much for your consideration of this request, and all the best to you. If you would like a description of the results of this survey, please contact Kathleen Dindoff at Murray Axmith and Associates, London, Ontario.

If yes: Thank you very much for your willingness to take a few minutes of your time to complete this survey. I want to stress that your participation is entirely voluntary, and the data will be handled in the strictest of confidence. Reporting will be done only group results, such that it would be impossible to identify an individual respondent or the company he or she represents. We will mail you a copy of the survey today, and we would appreciate it if you could complete and return it within one week of receiving it. Once the results of the survey are compiled, we will mail you a description of the results.

#### Appendix C

### **Informed Consent, Study 1**

#### INFORMED CONSENT

My signature on this form attests to my voluntary participation in completing the enclosed survey on résumé screening practices. I acknowledge that I have not been coerced or pressured to complete this survey, and I understand that I may decide not to participate in this survey at any time with penalty or repercussion. I have received a cover letter with the survey that explains the general purpose of this survey research, and I understand that there are no known risks to my participation in this survey.

I understand that individual survey results will be handled and reported in confidence, such that I or the organization that I represent cannot be identified in any reporting on survey results that may occur. I also understand that, should I complete and return this survey, I will receive feedback on the survey results.

I have read, understood, and agree with the foregoing statements.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

COMPANY \_\_\_\_\_

#### Appendix D

### **Cover Letter, Study 1**

<Date>

<Addressee Name, Title, Address>

Dear <*Name*>:

Thank you for agreeing to complete the enclosed survey on résumé screening practices. As discussed on the telephone, your participation is entirely voluntary. The purpose of this study is to gain insight on aspects of résumé screening practices in Canadian organizations. This study is sponsored by Murray Axmith S.W. Ontario Ltd., and it is a part of a doctoral research project in Industrial and Organizational Psychology that I am conducting in collaboration with Dr. Mitch Rothstein of the Ivey School of Business. We believe that the results of this survey will help to better understand the types of information that are important to recruiters today in screening résumés, and how that importance varies according to the type of position under consideration. It is our hope that organizations and applicants alike will benefit from this information.

The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, and a stamped return envelope has been included for your convenience. Please return your completed survey within two weeks of receiving it.

Individual responses will be handled in the strictest of confidence, as is required by ethical codes of the University of Western Ontario and the Department of Psychology. Data will be handled and reported in a manner that ensures that individual responses cannot be identified. Once the results of the survey have been compiled and analyzed, you will be mailed a summary report.

I appreciate your assistance with this research. With your help in projects such as these, employment screening practices can become more effective, applicants for employment can learn to present their qualifications more meaningfully, and employees can manager their career development in ways that will ensure their future marketability.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Dindoff, M.A., C.M.P. Career Transition Consultant Doctoral Candidate, Industrial/Organizational Psychology

#### Appendix E

#### Feedback Letter, Study 1

#### <Date>

<Name, Title, and Address of Participant>

#### Dear <*Name*>:

Thank you for your participation in the survey on resume screening practices, which you completed in the Spring. This is part of my dissertation research in Industrial and Organizational Psychology at the University of Western Ontario, which is being performed under the supervision of Dr. Mitchell Rothstein of the Ivey School of Business. The participation of people like you has resulted in valuable information on current resume screening practices in Ontario organizations. In addition, I very much appreciate your important input into my dissertation research. As promised, a summary of results of the survey is described below.

One hundred thirty surveys were sent to human resources professionals in organizations in southwestern Ontario. Eighty-four surveys were returned, for a return rate of 64.6%. The human resources professionals completing the survey had an average of 12.3 years experience in employee selection, and 76.2% had formal training in employee selection. The organizations represented by the survey participants had an average of 2126 employees and were predominantly manufacturing companies with multinational scope.

A tabulation of the responses has suggested that organizational fit considerations have relevance to human resources recruiters even at the early stage of the selection process at which resume screening occurs. However, skills-based resume aspects (job-related skills and competencies) were the most useful resume aspects for establishing fit with the respondents' organizations.

The types of résumé aspects most useful in establishing fit with an organization's culture and values, after job-related skills and competencies, were team orientation, accountability (except for entry-level positions), adaptability to change, collaborative approach, and customer service orientation. For manager and professional positions, leadership and experience in analysis and planning were also rated of significant value in establishing an applicant's fit with the organization (based on the résumé information).

With respect to the aspects of organizational fit that are most important in the hiring process in general, for each type of position, applicant skills-organizational needs fit was rated as most important, followed by values fit and applicant personality-organizational culture fit. Fit between industry in which an applicant gained his/her experience and the respondent's industry was the least important aspect of organizational fit for each type of position. In addition, each aspect of organizational fit was more important for managers and experienced professionals than it was for experienced technical support, entry-level university graduate and entry-level MBA positions.

Thirty-eight percent of the organizations that survey respondents represented use specific rating scales for résumé screening. Of those who use specific résumé rating scales, 77% of the scales include categories that involve assessment of an applicant's fit with the organizational culture and values.

Finally, survey respondents indicated that a specific and focused résumé was useful in establishing fit with the respondents' organizations for experienced technical support, experienced professional and manager positions. Such a résumé was much less helpful in evaluating an applicant's fit with the organization for entry-level university graduate and MBA graduate positions.

There isn't any published research on the importance of organizational fit considerations in résumé screening decisions, nor on the types of résumé information that helps human resources professionals to establish a candidate's potential for organizational fit. The survey that you completed forms one of three studies being conducted to investigate these issues. If you are interested in learning more about this topic, the following articles may be of interest to you.

- Brown, B.K., & Campion, M.A. (1994). Biodata phenomenology: Recruiters' perceptions and use of biographical information in résumé screening. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79, 897-908.
- Kristof, A.L. (1996). Person-organization fit: An integrative review of its conceptualizations, measurement, and implications. *Personnel Psychology*, 49, 1-49.

Should you have any questions about the survey, the results, or related issues, please feel free to contact me at (519) 642-4078 ext. 35 or kmdindof@julian.uwo.ca.

Thank you again for your generous assistance with this research project.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Dindoff, M.A., C.M.P. Principal Researcher

#### Appendix F

#### **Rating Scales, Study 2**

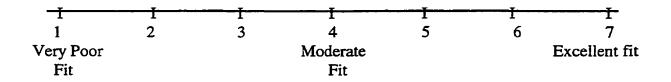
#### **JOB-SPECIFIC FIT RATING**

#### APPLICANT NUMBER \_\_\_\_

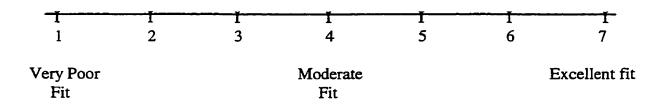
**Definition of Job-Specific Fit:** 

Job-specific fit refers to the extent to which an applicant's résumé and cover letter information indicates that the applicant has the abilities to perform the tasks that the "Receptionist/Word Processor" will be required to perform, e.g., preparing documents using WordPerfect 5.1, answering the telephone and transferring calls, etc., as specified in the "Job Vacancy Advertisement." Please use this definition of job-specific fit in your rating.

Please rate the job-specific fit represented by this applicant's résumé information, by circling the appropriate number on the scale below:



Please rate the potential for job-specific fit represented by this applicant's cover letter information, by circling the appropriate number on the scale below:



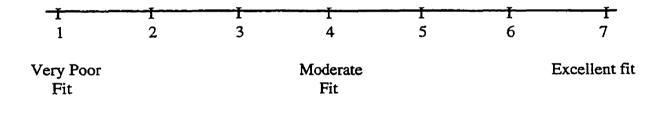
#### **ORGANIZATIONAL FIT RATING**

#### APPLICANT NUMBER

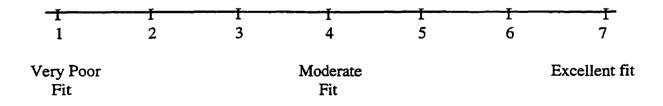
#### **Definition of Organizational fit:**

Organizational fit refers to the extent to which an applicant's résumé and cover letter information indicates that the applicant has the personal qualities, values and background that will enable him or her to work well in this particular organization, as specified in the "Organizational Profile". Please use this definition of organizational fit in your rating.

Please rate the potential for organizational fit represented by this applicant's résumé information, by circling the appropriate number on the scale below.



Please rate the potential for organizational fit represented by this applicant's cover letter information, by circling the appropriate number on the scale below:



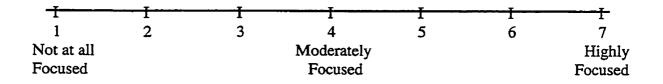
#### JOB FOCUS RATING

#### APPLICANT NUMBER

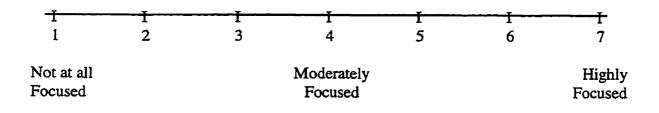
#### **Definition of Job Focus:**

Job Focus refers to the extent to which an applicant explicitly emphasizes the aspects of his/her résumé and cover letter information that are relevant to aspects of *this job*. Job Focus involves the degree that the applicant emphasizes the unique fit between his/her qualifications and the needs of the job, as opposed to a more general presentation of qualifications that might fit any administrative support job. Be sure to use this definition of job focus in your rating.

Please rate the job focus in this applicant's résumé presentation, by circling the appropriate number on the scale below:



Please rate the job focus in this applicant's cover letter presentation, by circling the appropriate number on the scale below:



#### ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS RATING

#### APPLICANT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

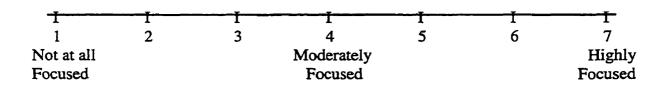
**Definition of Organizational Focus:** 

Organizational Focus refers to the extent to which an applicant explicitly emphasizes the aspects of his/her résumé and cover letter information that are relevant to aspects of *this organization*. Organizational Focus involves the degree that the applicant emphasizes the unique fit between his/her qualifications and the needs of the organization, as opposed to a more general presentation of qualifications that might fit any organizational setting. Be sure to use this definition of organizational focus on your ratings.

Please rate the organizational focus in this applicant's résumé presentation, by circling the appropriate number on the scale below:

<del>1</del> 1	 I 3	 4	 <del>- І</del> - б	<del></del>
Not at all Focused		Moderately Focused		Highly Focused

Please rate the organizational focus in this applicant's cover letter presentation, by circling the appropriate number on the scale below:



### Appendix G

### Copy of Newspaper Job Advertisement, Organizational Profile, Study 2

### RECEPTIONIST/WORD PROCESSOR

Is required by a dynamic, busy professional organization. This is an exceptional opportunity for a fully experienced individual who has:

- An excellent professional telephone manner
- Advanced computer skills in WordPerfect 5.1
- A self-starter with the flexibility to work independently
- Experience working with highly confidential and sensitive materials.
- Highly developed interpersonal skills, with demonstrated tact, diplomacy and good judgement
- Ability to work with exceptional accuracy in an interruptive environment
- Superior written and verbal communication skills

This full-time, permanent position offers an attractive salary and benefit package.

Candidates may apply in confidence by submitting a resume, before October 24th, to:

< Company Logo >

Company Name Company Address Company Fax Number

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE**

The employer that is advertising for the Receptionist/Word Processor position is a local affiliate of a respected international consulting firm, dealing with corporate sponsors in arranging services and with sponsored employees from all organizational ranks through to senior levels. The work pace in the local office can range from a hectic one with pressing deadlines and frequent interruptions, to a more moderately paced one. The organization regards tact, professionalism, courtesy, and compassion as essential in all employees, as well as responsiveness, integrity, competence, good judgment, and loyalty. The founder of the corporate parent organization is a key figure and spokesperson in the industry internationally, and he regards ethics and exceptional quality of service as keys to his business. The founder of the local affiliate worked with the largest office in the company and with the parent organization for several years. He started the local affiliate office five years prior to this search for a Receptionist/Word Processor. The founder/president of the local affiliate is highly credentialed, and he enjoys an entrepreneurial role, along with the control it affords him. He tends to be a professional, innovative, supportive yet private individual. He does expect loyalty, competence, integrity, and professionalism, and he will reward such with praise, time off, pay, Christmas functions and bonuses, and returned loyalty. To date, the local affiliate has been far more successful than the parent company anticipated, and it is consistently among the top offices of the firm's 15 Canadian offices.

# Appendix H

# Experimental Résumés, Study 3

# SUMMARY OF RÉSUMÉ MANIPULATIONS:

John Jones	High Applicant-Job Fit	High P-O Fit, Organic Organization *
Roger Peterson	High Applicant-Job Fit	High P-O Fit, Organic Organization *
Daniel Watters	Low Applicant-Job Fit	Low P-O Fit, Organic Organization *
Jeremy Jenkins	Low Applicant-Job Fit	Low P-O Fit, Organic Organization *
Alexander Carlson	High Applicant-Job Fit	Low P-O Fit, Organic Organization *
Andrew Smythe	High Applicant-Job Fit	Low P-O Fit, Organic Organization *
David Evans	Low Applicant-Job Fit	High P-O Fit, Organic Organization *
Samuel Jarvis	Low Applicant-Job Fit	High P-O Fit, Organic Organization *

\* Note: Each résumé the opposite level of P-O fit for the Mechanistic Organization

### **JOHN JONES**

### 

### (416) 691-2542 ♦ e-mail jjayjones@sympatico.ca

**OBJECTIVE:** A position where I can use my business knowledge in a progressive organization that provides opportunities for advancement

### EDUCATION

B. Comm., University of Toronto, 1998

Computer Courses (Microsoft Office), St. Clair College (Windsor), 1994-95

Diploma, Business Administration, St. Clair College (Windsor), 1993

### EXPERIENCE

**ROYAL TRUST,** Toronto headquarters: **Summer Internship** Summer 1998 Assisted with new product launch in Wealth Management Services as part of a multidisciplinary project team

ROYAL TRUST, Windsor Downtown: Personal Banking Officer 1993-1995 Summers 1996, 1997 Sold investment, retirement and lending products to new and existing clients Negotiated loan and GIC rates within prescribed limits Counselled clients on financial planning and credit management issues Completed comprehensive training program

**ROYAL TRUST, Windsor South: Customer Service Representative** 1993

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Computer Skills: Microsoft Office, MS Project, e-mail/fax, Internet

- Activities: Member, U of T Marketing Club U of T Biz School Softball Team; tournament participant, 1996, 1997 Royal Trust Employee Social Committee (Windsor) Royal Trust Softball Team (Windsor)
- Achievements: Dean's List, 1997, University of Toronto School of Business

### References will be supplied upon request

### **ROGER PETERSON**

28 Downsview Ave #3, Etobicoke ON M9W 2X2, (416) 672-2545 rogepete@gtn.net

CAREER GOAL	Management trainee or other position where I can through hard work and business knowledge.		
EDUCATION	<b>B.A., Honors Business Administration Ivey School of Business</b> Dean's list, 1997	1998	
<u> </u>	Certificate, Adult Education, Part-time & Contr Education, UWO	inuing 1994	

#### **WORK HISTORY**

### Canada Trust Call Centre, London ON

Answer customer inquiries, market financial products to meet customer needs.

#### Freelance Computer Software Trainer

Marketed software training services to software training providers and companies. Negotiated contracts and training schedules.

Conducted computer software training for Fanshawe College, Productivity Point International, and on direct provider basis to companies such as Canada Trust.

**Desktop Publishing Specialist, Kinko's Copies, London ON** 1993, 1994-95 Produced resumes, brochures, flyers, overheads, forms and a wide variety of other documents, utilizing Macintosh computers, Pagemaker and other software. Assisted other operations team members as needed.

Sales Coordinator, Productivity Point International, London ON 1993-94 Contacted corporate training sponsors to market computer technology training Answered inquiries from corporate training directors and individuals. Worked as part of sales & administration team. Participated on special project team for launch of MCSE certification training, focusing on sales and marketing aspects of the project.

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

FFFRENCES	Lipon Request
Activities:	Ivey Business School Marketing Club, 1996-98 Participate on three sports teams; Sigma Tau Fratemity Participant, UWO Water Polo Tournament, Ivey Biz Team, '97
	deals
Achievements:	Operated own business for two years Demonstrated skill in prospecting & closing business
Achievemente	software
Computer Skills:	Proficient in most current business and graphics
Languages:	English, working knowledge of French

1995-97

1998-present

### **DANIEL WATTERS**

4487 Orc (416) 884-6895	hard Park Blvd, North York, ON M8N 3P6 dwatters@wlu.business.c
CAREER GOAL	Sales/marketing or marketing analyst position in the financial services industry, with an emphasis on commercial business
EDUCATION	Bachelor of Commerce, June 1998 Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo ON
EXPERIENCE	Meadowpark Gas Bar & Variety, Cambridge ON Office Assistant (Summers, Holidays), 1996-presen Performed various administrative functions on relief basis during summer vacations Reorganized store layout and merchandising Assisted with implementation of computerized cash register system Watters Construction, Cambridge ON Carpentry Foreperson, Carpenter, 1993-1996
ACHIEVEMENTS	Supervised carpentry crews of up to 4 people
	Developed hands-on as well as academic knowledge o business through work in family businesses
EXTRACURRICULAR	Management Club, Wilfrid Laurier University
	Participant, Toronto Island Cycling Race, 1997
	Weight training, cycling, skiing, chess
ADDITIONAL SKILLS	Computer literate in Microsoft Office '97, Internet
	Good knowledge of accounting and office procedures
	Communication abilities in English and French
	Demonstrated ability to supervise others
REFERENCES	Available upon request

JEREMY JENKINS

2-755 Dunsmore Road, Scarborough ON M7T 4E2

(416) 259-7743 🔹 jeremy\_jenkins@sympatico.ca

### OBJECTIVE

Marketing analyst position, with future potential for commercial sales & marketing responsibilities

### EDUCATION

B.Comm., Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, 1998

### **EXPERIENCE**

Assistant ManagerSummer 1998Pro Hardware, Peterborough Square MallSupervise store operations and 1-3 staff on my shiftsPrepare bank deposits and sales reports

Summer Internship in Retail OperationsSummer 1997Canadian Tire Corporation, Toronto corporate officeRotated among merchandising, purchasing and store accounting functions

Sales Associate Pro Hardware, Peterborough Square Mali Part-time 1993-1998

### EXTRACURRICULAR

Management Club, Trent University	1997-1998
Participant, Toronto Harbourfront 10K Race	1997, 1998

Running, weight training, swimming, collecting antique tools

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

Computer literate in WordPerfect 7, Quattro Pro, Windows '95 & Internet

Willing to travel or relocate as required

Active lifestyle, international travel experience, reliable

References upon request

### ALEXANDER CARLSON 102-3662 Lakeshore Blvd., Toronto ON M5Z 2T2

(416) 877-2569, carlsand@aol.com

JOB GOAL		al Services Marketing, Commercial Sales at ve Level				
EDUCATION		<ul> <li>B.A., Honors Business Administration, 1998</li> <li>Ivey School of Business, University of Western</li> <li>Ontario, London, Canada</li> <li>Dean's List, 1997</li> </ul>				
EXPERIENCE		<ul> <li>Summer Assistant / Intern         London Life Mortgage Division, London, @/@#ie8/97         Gained experience with documents required for             mortgage renewal         Performed tasks related to set-up of mortgage call             centre         </li> <li>Broker's Assistant         Carlson Insurance Brokers, London, Ontario 1993-98         Assisted with property and casualty insurance             needs, processed paperwork, performed data             entry.         Negotiated with insurance company             representatives to facilitate client claims         </li> </ul>				
		processing.				
EXTRACURR	ICULAR	Marketing Club, Ivey School of Business 1996-98				
		Western Speed Skating Tournaments 1995, 1996				
		Music, roller blading, skating, theatre				
PROFILE OF	SKILLS	Good computer skills, Microsoft Office '97, Internet				
		Languages: English, working knowledge of French				
		Experience with operations of family business				
		Sales experience				

### **ANDREW SMYTHE**

### 704-22 Legend Drive ♦ Markham, Ontario L4V 2W9 ♦ (905) 348-2728 apsmythe@queens.business.ca

### CAREER OBJECTIVE

Position in commercial lending, with future opportunity for sales/marketing role

### **EDUCATION**

### B.A., Honors Business Administration, June 1998 Queens University, Kingston, Ontario

• Dean's list, 1998

### **EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE**

### NESBITT BURNS SECURITIES, London, Ontario 1996-present

Broker's Assistant (part-time, vacation relief), Dec. 1996-present

#### Broker's Assistant (parental leave replacement), Apr.-Sept. 1996

Handle telephone inquiries, schedule appointments and meetings, and produce correspondence in WordPerfect 7

- Make telephone sales prospecting calls to potential clients and annual calls to existing clients
- Prepare monthly sales recap reports and average portfolio growth analyses in Quattro Pro

Update client database; perform research and special assignments as requested.

# Previous positions as waitperson, lifeguard, and construction labourer, 1993-96

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Marketing Club, Faculty of Business,	Queens University	1997-98
--------------------------------------	-------------------	---------

### **Queens Grand Prix Participant**

1995, 1996

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Computer Skills:	WordPerfect 7, Quattro Pro, Windows '95, Internet
Hobbies:	Woodworking, fishing, music, car mechanics and restoration
References:	Will be provided upon request

**OBJECTIVE:** Entry-level position for HBA graduate, with flexible opportunities for growth and advancement

### EDUCATION

**B.Comm.**, Faculty of Business Nippissing University, North Bay, Ontario 1998

Teambuilding Course, Nippissing University Athletic Program Summer 1995

Outward Bound Program Summer 1994 Intense outdoor program focused on teambuilding and group problem-solving

### EMPLOYMENT

**Work-Study Program Placement,** Faculty of Business, Graphics Services **1997-98** Assisted faculty, administrative staff and students with printing and graphics needs.

Worked as part of a self-managed team that rotated equipment maintenance and customer service duties among the team members.

Help Desk Staff, Nippissing University Student Computing Facility 1995-97 Assisted students with software and file management problems in drop-in centre.

Crew Member, McDonald's Restaurant, Downsview ON (part-time/casual)1993-95

#### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Management Club, Nippissing University	1997-98
Nippissing University Varsity Volleyball Team	1996-98
Provincial tournament guarter-finals, 1997	

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Computer Skills:** Excellent knowledge of current wordprocessing, graphics, and spreadsheet software

- Hobbies: Team sports of all kinds, especially volleyball, rowing, hockey Performing in local comedy group
- **References:** Available upon request

SAMUEL JARVIS	7-725 Eaton Road, Richmon (416) 621-8135 smjarv		
OBJECTIVE	A position where I can use and expand my business knowledge, contributing to the success of the enterprise		
EDUCATION	B.A., Honors Business Administrat Laurentian University	ion, June 1998	
	Four-day conference on recreation ma	anagement, 1997	
	Personal interest courses in sports per coaching	sychology and	
WORK HISTORY	Lead Counsellor/Duty Manager Counsellor, Junior Counsellor Sur CAMP MUSKOKA Participated on project team to revamp c activities, 1995-96.		
	Summer Intern TORONTO RAPTORS Worked on human resources project teat teambuilding seminar for head office stat		
	Sales Associate SPORT CHEK Assisted customers with sporting goods of Resolved or referred customer problems		
EXTRACURRICULAR	Laurentian Business School Softball & Basketball Teams Participant, 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament, London ON, 1997 International Business Club, Laurentian University		
SKILLS & INTERESTS	<i>Computer Skills:</i> WordPerfect 7, Qua Presentations, Internet	ttro Pro, Corel	
	Language Skills: English, basic profic	iency in French	
	<i>Interests, Activities:</i> Team competitive kinds, local soccer league team (3 years) travel		
REFERENCES	Will be forwarded upon request		

# **RÉSUMÉ CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES**

### High Job Fit:

- Stronger academic performance (1 year on Dean's List)
- Graduation from a better business school (Ivey, Toronto, Queens)
- Relevant experience (Sales, Marketing, Finance)
- Membership in Marketing Club at school

### Organizational Fit (high for Organization 1; low for Organization 2):

- Interest in learning (some history of additional coursework/continuing education v. degree only)
- Team orientation, collaborative approach (work experience with team focus, participation in team sports, interest in group/team activities v. participation in individual sports or pursuits [skiing, cycling, running, mechanics, woodworking])
- Career goals (general/flexible focus v. specific/relevant focus)

Ensure equivalence re:

# of years of work experience University degree in business Computer skills in current software (MS Office or WordPerfect Suite) membership in a business club at university (marketing v. other) additional activities/sports (group v solo) participation in a competitive event (team v. solo competition) French language skills one résumé per cell has "lined" (graphics) format one résumé per cell has entrepreneurial experience (self, family)

#### **Appendix I**

#### **Two Organizational Profiles, Study 3**

### **ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE (Mechanistic Structure)**

### **ABC BANK OF CANADA**

ABC Bank of Canada is one of Canada's five largest financial institutions. It is a publicly traded company, headquartered in Toronto, with operations throughout Canada and subsidiaries in the U.S., Caribbean, and Asia.

ABC Bank views itself as a **progressive**, values-guided company that prides itself on its standardization of the work of the organization, enabling employees and functions to be consistent from location to location.

As have all financial institutions, ABC Bank has undergone significant change in recent years to improve its financial performance, concentrate on core and emerging business opportunities, and improve the accountability and performance of its human resources. As a result, it is important to ABC Bank that its employees are willing to adhere to the bank's programs, policies, guidelines and procedures (which have been carefully researched and standardized), consulting the bank's appropriate policy/procedure manual when necessary.

Regardless of position, ABC Bank values customer focus, integrity, professionalism, energy and self-reliance in its employees. It strives to hire employees who seek jobs that are clearly specified, with accountabilities that are not dependent on others.

In addition, this organization seeks people who have a clear career focus on the type of position for which they are applying, as the bank prefers to hire people who are focused on what they want and whose goals match the opportunities that the organization has to offer.

It rewards salaried employee performance and contributions with incentive pay and advancement opportunities.

ABC Bank prides itself on being a key contributor to the economic health of Canada and Canadians. The organization is also dedicated to community involvement, and the Bank sponsors a number of community and charitable events throughout Canada each year.

#### **IDEAL EMPLOYEE PROFILE**

A person who is willing to be individually accountable for the outcomes of his or her work.

A person who has a clear focus and who is willing to follow the rules to achieve consistency and quality from the customer's perspective.

A person who is interested in becoming a master of his or her career speciality.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE (Organic Structure)**

### **ABC BANK OF CANADA**

ABC Bank of Canada is one of Canada's five largest financial institutions. It is a publicly traded company, headquartered in Toronto, with operations throughout Canada and subsidiaries in the U.S., Caribbean, and Asia.

ABC Bank views itself as a **progressive**, values-guided company that encourages and rewards continuous learning in its employees.

As have all financial institutions, ABC Bank has undergone significant change in recent years to improve its financial performance, concentrate on core and emerging business opportunities, and improve the accountability and performance of its human resources. As a result, it is important to ABC Bank that its employees are **adaptable to change**, seeing it as an opportunity rather than a threat.

Regardless of position, ABC Bank values customer focus, integrity, professionalism, energy and contribution to team outcomes in its employees.

In addition, this organization seeks people who have an **open focus on the type of position for which they are applying**, as the bank prefers to move employees through different types of positions over time.

It rewards salaried employee performance and contributions with incentive pay and advancement opportunities.

ABC Bank prides itself on being a key contributor to the economic health of Canada and Canadians. The organization is also dedicated to community involvement, and the Bank sponsors a number of community and charitable events throughout Canada each year.

#### **IDEAL EMPLOYEE PROFILE**

An individual who is team-oriented and willing to contribute to the effectiveness of his or her work team.

A person who is adaptable to change, and with a flexible focus about his or her future goals.

A person who is willing to engage in continuous learning to adapt to future changes.

### Appendix J

### **Position Description, Study 3**

### **POSITION DESCRIPTION**

### COMMERCIAL MORTGAGE ANALYST (FINANCIAL ANALYST)

- Learns/understands key commercial mortgage risk factors and analyzes the risk potential of commercial mortgage lending opportunities. Determines and evaluates significance of key issues in each lending opportunity.
- Evaluates negotiated commercial mortgage deals for risk, fees, interest rates, collateral, documentation and financial analysis on property owners. Makes recommendations regarding viability of proposed deals to branch manager, who in turn secures final approval from Vice President, Commercial Lending.
- Analyzes commercial real estate marketplace in specified geographic territory (e.g., Western Canada) to ensure that market trends in commercial real estate and financing are understood and that the highest quality lending opportunities are pursued.
- Assists commercial mortgage specialists with mortgage renewals and new mortgages. Completes financial analysis on mortgage applicants. Attends meetings with commercial mortgage specialist and commercial mortgage applicants to observe negotiation process.
- Develops and maintains contacts and relationships with colleagues in the branch and corporate office, and with key external people in commercial real estate in the branch's territory -- commercial real estate brokers, developers, property owners/managers, key government and corporate officials.
- This is a salaried position with incentive compensation for individual and branch achievements. Entry base salary range is \$40,000 \$60,000.
- Career progression to Commercial Mortgage Specialist (Commercial Sales/Marketing Representative) in 2-5 years. In this role, employee will market commercial mortgages within specified geographic territory, negotiate terms and close mortgage deals with property owners and their representatives. Expected compensation (base plus incentive) for a successful commercial mortgage specialist in the position for five years is \$60,000 -\$100,000+.

#### **IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE**

- Entry-level position for recent graduate of university business program (H.B.A., B.Comm., or M.B.A. degree)
- Demonstrated interest in marketing/sales.
- Prefer some experience/exposure to financial services or marketing.

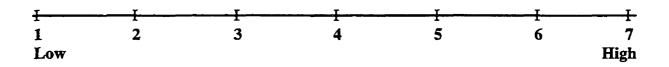
Appendix K

**Résumé Rating Scales, Study 3** 

# **RÉSUMÉ RATINGS for**

Résumé Name\_\_\_\_\_

Please use one **RÉSUMÉ RATINGS** form for each of the eight résumés provided to you. Write the name of the individual whose résumé you are evaluating on this form. Acting as if you are a human resources representative for ABC Bank of Canada, please evaluate this résumé by giving it a rating in each of the four categories below, using the following rating scale.



1. Based on this individual's résumé, the Position Description/Ideal Candidate Profile, and the Organizational Profile, please rate *how likely you are to invite this applicant for an interview.* Please use the above scale in your rating.

RATING: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please rate your impression of *potential for job-specific fit* for this applicant with respect to the position of Commercial Mortgage Analyst, based on this individual's résumé and the Position Description / Ideal Candidate Profile. Please use the above scale in your rating.

RATING: \_\_\_\_

3. Please rate your impression of *potential for organizational fit* for this applicant with respect to ABC Bank of Canada, based on this individual's résumé and the Organizational Profile / Ideal Employee Profile. Please use the above scale in your rating.

RATING: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix L

### **Cover Letter, Study 3**

Dear Research Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study on Résumé Screening in Canadian financial services organizations. Please read the *Position Description/Ideal Candidate Profile* and the *Organizational Profile* provided to you in the research study materials, so that you understand their contents. Then, acting as a human resources representative for ABC Bank of Canada, read each of the *eight résumés* provided to you. These are from new graduates of university business programs at Ontario universities, and they are candidates for a Commercial Mortgage Analyst (financial analyst) position with the bank. Using the Résumé Rating forms provided to you, please evaluate each of these résumés.

You may return the completed study materials (eight rating forms-one per résumé, a Background Data form, and a signed informed consent form) by mail in the enclosed envelope. Alternatively, you may prefer to fax the completed study materials to (519) 642-4019. A Fax Back form has been included for your convenience. If returning the study materials by fax, you may transfer the ratings for each of the eight résumés from the ratings forms to the spaces provided on the front of the Fax Back form. Please include the Background Data form and the signed Informed Consent form with the fax transmission.

If you have any questions, please contact Kathleen Dindoff at (519) 642-4078 ext. 35, fax (519) 642-4019, or e-mail kmdindof@julian.uwo.ca.

I appreciate your participation in this research effort. After the data from this study has been compiled and analyzed, you will be mailed a report on the findings.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Dindoff, M.A., C.M.P. Doctoral Candidate, Industrial-Organizational Psychology

#### Appendix M

### Informed Consent, Study 3

#### **INFORMED CONSENT**

My signature on this form attests to my voluntary participation in this research study on Résumé Screening, conducted by Kathleen Dindoff, Research Unit on Work and Productivity, University of Western Ontario. I acknowledge that I have not been coerced in any way to participate in this research study, and I understand that I may withdraw from participation at any time without consequence. I understand that there are no known risks to my participation in this study. I also understand that the data and the ratings that I provide as part of this study will be handled in the strictest of confidence and reported only on an aggregate basis, such that my data/ratings, my identity or the organization that I represent will not be able to be identified in any communication or reporting of the results of this study. Should I have any questions about this study, I understand that I am free to ask them.

Name	Date
Position/Title	
Company/Organization	
Signature	

## Appendix N

### Participant Information Form, Study 3

# **RÉSUMÉ SCREENING STUDY**

### BACKGROUND DATA

Have your ever been involved in résumé screening or employee selection?

Yes	RF F	Number of years involvement	
No			

Have you had formal training in résumé screening or employee selection?



Does your organization offer commercial mortgages?

Yes	
No	

#### Appendix O

#### **Ethics Approvals**

The University of Western Ontario Department of Psychology

March 30, 1998

#### MEMORANDUM

To: K. Dindoff

#### STATUS

#### <u>X</u> Approved

Approved conditional to making changes listed below (please file changes with your application to use the subject pool with Helen Harris in Rm. 7304) Please make the changes listed below and resubmit for review

#### SIGN-UP POSTER

- \_\_\_\_ Briefly describe the task required of subjects
- \_\_\_\_ Do not "hype" the advertising of your study
- \_\_\_\_ Use 10cpi or 12cpi, with standard letter size, for description
- \_\_\_\_ Other (see attached sheet)

INFORMED CONSENT SHEET

- \_\_\_\_ Briefly describe the task the subjects are agreeing to perform
- Promise that the data will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only
- Promise that audic and/or video tapes will be erased, in part or entirely, at the subjects' wishes at any time
- \_\_\_\_ State how many credits the subjects will receive for participation \_\_\_\_ State that subjects may terminate the experiment at any time
- without loss of promised credit(s)
- \_\_\_\_ State that there are no known risks to participation or state the risks
- \_\_\_\_\_ State that subjects will receive written feedback at the end of the session or study and/or that subjects have had an opportunity to ask questions about the study
- \_\_\_\_ Other (see attached sheet)

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

\_\_\_\_ Elaborate your feedback

- Rewrite your feedback at a level that is understandable to a Psychology 020/023 student
- \_\_\_\_ Add a few references at the end and/or your name and how you can be reached
- Other (see attached sheet)

OTHER \_\_\_\_ See attached comments

c. Rothstein

[KD30.eth]

The University of Western Ontario Department of Psychology

October 16, 1998

#### MEMORANDUM

To: Kathleen Dindoff From: Jim Olson on behalf of the Ethics and Subject Pool Committee (A) Re:Ethical review of "Resume Screening" Protocol # 98 10 09

#### STATUS

Approved
 Approved conditional to making changes listed below
 (please file changes with your application to use the subject pool with Helen Harris in Rm. 7304)
 Please make the changes listed below and resubmit for review

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- Briefly describe the task required of subjects
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- \_\_\_\_ Rewrite your feedback at a level that is understandable to a
  - Psychology 020/023 student
- Add a few references at the end and/or your name and how you can
- be reached
- Other (see attached sheet)

#### OTHER \_\_\_\_ See attached comments

c. M. Rothstein