



COVER LETTER GUIDELINES



OFFICE OF CAREER & INTERNSHIP SERVICES

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COVER LETTERS

The purpose of a cover letter is to answer the big question in the Manager's mind: "Why should I interview this person?"

This document is your chance to market yourself as the best person for the position offered. It is equally important to the resume. An effective cover letter can help you get an interview, while a poor one will cause your resume to be ignored.

However, be careful not to repeat information from the resume. Your job is to introduce yourself, your selling points, and the resume. While the resume presents your experiences and skills, the cover letter is pointing out the type of position you want and how qualified you happen to be. You need to highlight the portions of your experiential background that would interest the employer, your skills and talents. The cover letter can also explain gaps in your education or employment history or explain the reasons behind your changing career focus!

Plan on the three paragraph approach:

OPENING PARAGRAPH

- Explain the reason for the letter and/or identify the position you are seeking.
- Mention how you learned of the position (newspaper, Career Services Office, name of contact, Internet website.....).

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH

- Demonstrate your knowledge and interest in the organization.
- State the skills you can bring to the position that would meet the requirements of the job.
- Refer the reader to the resume for details, but do not repeat this information.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

- End with an action statement – make a request for a personal interview.
- State clearly how you wish to be reached (phone number, etc.). Tell the employer if you plan to follow up with a phone call or if you want the employer to contact you. Clarify when and where you may be reached and end with an expression of enthusiasm or thanks.

COVER LETTER FORMAT

Remember that there is no one official format for the cover letter, but there are some guidelines to follow:

- Use bullets, indent, or **bold face** to emphasize and organize information.
- Every cover letter is an original letter aimed at one specific position and/or corporation. Avoid re-using letters from other applications.
- Address the letter to a specific person (phone the company to ask for a name!). Spell names and title correctly.
- Write the letter in standard business format. Left-justified form is most commonly used today. Make sure the entire letter is framed evenly on the page. From top to bottom it must appear balanced.
- Include your contact information (name, address, phone number).

- Vary sentence structure to create interest, and avoid beginning too many sentences with “I.”
- Keep the letter to one page.
- Proofread. Then have someone else proofread!
- Use the same bond paper and laser-quality print as your resume.
- Personally sign each letter.
- Remember to follow-up every letter and resume you send.

GENERAL OUTLINE FOR A COVER LETTER**(Include your contact information as it appears on your resume!)**

James A. Roy

17 Prospect Street
Pine Bush, NY 12566(845) 531-9005
jroy@aol.com

July 25, 2007

*(2 spaces under your address)**(2 spaces under the date)*Mark Hansen
Director of Human Resources
ABC Corporation
999 Dunderberg Avenue
New York, NY 10005*Full Name,
title,
address of letter's recipient**(2 spaces)*

Dear Mr. Hansen:

*(2 spaces)***FIRST PARAGRAPH:** State the reason for writing, the name of the position or the kind of work you are seeking, and mention where you heard about the opening.*(2 spaces)***SECOND/THIRD PARAGRAPH:** This is where you state your reasons for being interested in the position or company and mention that you have the qualifications. You can briefly review your past experience, education, and volunteer work (as appropriate) to show your abilities required to do the job. DO NOT restate information from the resume, but refer the reader to sections of the resume, instead.*(2 spaces)***THIRD PARAGRAPH:** State what you want to happen next. Mention your interest in meeting with the employer and indicate clearly how he/she is to contact you. You may also plan to follow-up first to ensure that your letter/resume have been received. Thank the employer in advance for his/her consideration of you.*(2 spaces)*

Sincerely,

*Your Signature**(4 spaces)*

Your Typed Name Here

*(2 spaces)*Enclosure *(This indicates your enclosed resume)*

SAMPLE COVER LETTERS

#1 – Letter in response to classified ad

New England College is accepting applications for an experienced outside sales recruiter. Duties will include travel to high school, job fairs, etc., soliciting, continual follow-ups, and closings. Requires excellent verbal and communication skills, ability to work with a diverse group. Prior sales experience and Bachelor's degree a must. Send resume and references to: Director of Marketing, New England College, Box AG, Henniker, NH 25802

Date

Name
Director of Marketing
New England College
Box AG
Henniker, New Hampshire 25802

Dear Mr./Ms X:

I noted with great interest your advertisement in the New Hampshire *Union Leader* for an Assistant Director of Marketing Recruitment. I understand your need for a person with excellent verbal and communication skills and I believe that my background as president of a national management collegiate chapter may be of great value to you.

Overseeing the 400 members of this chapter strengthened my knowledge and appreciation of working with students from across the country. Additionally, I have two years' experience as a sales associate for a local clothing store where our compensation was based on soliciting, continuously following-up, and closing sales. I feel my experience and Bachelors degree in marketing make me a unique candidate for this position.

As requested, a copy of my resume and references are enclosed. I look forward to an opportunity to discuss my credentials in a personal interview. I will call on April 27 to arrange a time to meet and discuss the position.

Sincerely,

John Q. Public

John Q. Public

Enclosures

SOURCE: Job Search Tactics by Kathleen M. Lordan. Pages 52-53. Charleston, West Virginia: Cambridge Educational. 1995

**#2- Letter in response
to classified ad**

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
To be a liaison with public & clients
5 years experience, 65 wpm,
Word Perfect.
Attention: Teresa Micelli

JUAN ORTEGA
1124 Bakery Avenue
Bakersville, NC 90000
(555) 998-0090

April 18, 2000

Teresa Micelli
Box 7344
Sunday Times
1123 N. Center Street
Bakersville, NC 11233

Dear Ms. Micelli:

I read with great interest your ad for Administrative Assistant which appeared in the *Sunday Times*, July 14th. I am very enthusiastic because my background matches the qualifications you are seeking.

As you will note from my enclosed resume, I have more than five years experience in the field. I began as a secretary and worked my way up to an administrative position at Martel & Martel. I type 85 words per minute and am proficient in WordPerfect and Pagemaker.

I have always been complimented on the quality of my work and was personally responsible for designing our successful company newsletter.

Although I enjoy my current position, I would prefer a more challenging job where I can combine my creative talents and interpersonal skills.

I look forward to meeting with you in person to demonstrate that, along with my credentials, I have the personality that makes for a successful team player.

Sincerely,

Juan Ortega

Juan Ortega

Enclosure

NOTE: This is a targeted letter with a specific job focus. Notice how the letter answers the job qualifications.

SOURCE: The Resume Writer's Workbook by Stanley Krantman. Page 101. 2nd edition. Delmar: 2001.

#3

SUSAN CHEN

1212 Otter Drive
Smithton, NY 9000
(555) 889-8789

June 3, 2000

Michelle Irani
Process Engineer
Sealico Steel & Metal
700 Sparrow Lane
Tiger Creek, AK 90000

Dear Ms. Irani:

I enjoyed speaking with you on the phone earlier this week regarding a position with Sealico. Your division sounds exciting and your commitment to “total quality” is very impressive – a conviction I share with you.

As you can see from my enclosed resume, I have twelve years experience in metallurgy. At Pershall, my contributions as Process Engineer cut production costs by 14% and increased productivity.

I am optimistic that my knowledge and expertise in metallurgy, as well as my business experience in dealing with customer’s needs and material selection, will be an asset to Sealico.

I look forward to meeting you personally and will follow-up this letter with a call next week to arrange a meeting at your convenience. I welcome the opportunity to prove that I can make an effective contribution to Sealico.

Sincerely,

Susan Chen

Enclosure

NOTE:: This is an example of a cover letter which follows up an informational phone call. Although four paragraphs in length, it remains an expansion of the three paragraph format.

SOURCE: The Resume Writer’s Workbook by Stanley Krantman. Page 102. 2nd edition.
Delmar: 2001

#4

SUSAN CHEN

1212 Otter Drive
Smithton, NY 9000
(555) 889-8789

June 23, 2000

Michelle Irani
Process Engineer
Sealico Steel & Metal
700 Sparrow Lane
Tiger Creek, AK 9000

Dear Michelle,

I want to express my sincere appreciation for the interview on January 18th. The opportunity to meet you and become acquainted first hand with the fine work you and your team have been doing, has strengthened my interest in working for Sealico.

I think your plan to implement a quality control checklist is excellent. I feel this is an area that I can be of great assistance to you. I am confident that my experience in setting up such a program will add to Sealico's efficiency and save you money.

Sealico is a dynamic and growing organization, and I would love to be a part of your team. I hope I am extended the opportunity to prove that I can make an effective contribution.

Sincerely,

Susan Chen

NOTE: The above is an example of a Thank You letter written after a job interview. This is just a courtesy, but it can be a factor that leads to an employer's choosing you for the position! The informal salutation instead of "Dear Ms. Irani:" is only appropriate if the interviewer prefers informality.

SOURCE: The Resume Writer's Workbook by Stanley Krantman. Page 102. 2nd edition.
Delmar: 2001

