

Sample Cover Letter

February 1, 2012

Mr. Hiring Manager
ABC Corporation
Chicago, IL 60657

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am pleased to submit my resume for your Human Resources Assistant position. Having just graduated with a Bachelors of Arts in History from the University of Wisconsin - Madison, in December 2011, I feel I possess the skills and qualifications you require. In a large, busy firm like ABC Corporation, it's imperative to have a strong HR staff in place. I'm impressed with the fact you have over 800 employees and very little employee turnover and I'm looking forward to assisting your staff with such efforts as retention, compensation plans, benefits and employee morale. Human Resources is an area that I've always known I would excel in, as I truly care about others, enjoy researching and finding solutions to discrepancies and problems, and enjoy an ever changing work environment.

To be a successful, respected Human Resources employee, empathy and compassion are paramount. As you can see by my resume, I have volunteered extensively with underprivileged families. This has taught me patience, perspective and provided a sense of self-satisfaction that was instrumental in propelling me into the field of Human Resources. Additionally, my position at the Boulderado Country Club exposed me to a demanding high-end clientele. These experiences would allow me to be comfortable assisting everyone from the CEO to a new file clerk at ABC Corporation with their HR needs. Strong communication and interpersonal skills are also necessary to assist employees. I have often been described as very outgoing and extroverted by my past managers and feel that I am a very positive person. I have held numerous customer service positions and enjoy working with and talking with others. I would represent your department professionally and positively and reflect the image you require.

Lastly, your job description states that you need someone who has worked extensively with HRLink, has experience processing payroll and administering benefits. In my internship last summer, I worked with HRLink daily and am very comfortable with it. Although I was not responsible for payroll or benefits directly, I have been exposed to the process and am confident I could learn it quickly. In my Human Resources Management class I completed a semester long project analyzing different benefit options for a large manufacturing company and ultimately making recommendations to management. *My History coursework has more than prepared me for this type of position. The skills gained in my liberal arts major have helped me become a strong researcher, competent presenter, analytical thinker and succinct writer. I am eager to use what I have learned.* I feel my experience and education make me an ideal candidate. I am well aware of the job requirements and rigors of the position and welcome the opportunity to speak more about it. Please let me know if I can provide you with further information. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew Zwishmish

NOTE: This letter is intentionally longer than most cover letters in order to demonstrate different ways to sell yourself.

Cover Letter Structure (3-4 paragraphs)

Opening

This first paragraph should tell the reader why you are writing. And it should grab their attention so that they keep reading!

- Who you are? Your year in school, degree, etc.
- Why you are writing to them—i.e., what position are you applying for—include a personal contact name here if you were referred by a friend, professor or mutual contact. You can include how you learned of the opening.
- Why you are interested in the position—really think about your answer to this, it needs to be genuine.
- Show your industry/company knowledge and demonstrate briefly that you understand their needs. You'll use this as a transition to the next paragraph which will show why you are the best candidate for their job.

The Sales Pitch

The second (and maybe third) paragraph is your opportunity to convince the employer that you would be a good candidate to interview.

- Choose 3 skills/traits the employer is requiring and show how you meet these requirements. Use the job description, requirements or qualifications to inspire your paragraph. Pull from past work experience, coursework and personal experience.
- DO NOT regurgitate your resume. Relate your experience to them and their job. Where your resume is factual, this is your chance to show the worth of these experiences as they relate to the open position.
- Show that you are action and results oriented. Bring each story and example full circle to include a positive ending and result where possible. Or, if results aren't applicable, what did you learn?

Closing

- Restate in one sentence how you can add value to the firm.
- Restate your interest in the firm and thank them for their consideration.
- Identify your next action. Remember that you are responsible for the follow-up if possible.
- You will receive a call/email if selected for an interview, keep in mind most companies will not contact you if they are not interested in you.

Additional Tips

- Address your letter to a specific person if possible. If it is not possible to send your letter to someone (many busy HR departments will not include a name for fear of being inundated with calls) simply address your letter to the "Recruiting Committee" or "Hiring Committee" or "Hiring Manager". Or do not include a salutation at all.
- Use a business letter format, make sure your letter is grammatically correct and free of all errors.
- Always have someone else read your letters before you send them. It is exceedingly difficult to find your own mistakes.