



Professional Letters Guide:

The Cover Letter, The Follow-Up Letter,
The Networking Letter

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

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(BASIC COVER LETTER EXAMPLE)

You may opt to make your header look like your resume...

Ben D'Boise

ACU Box 55555
Abilene, TX 79699
(325) 555-5555
bdb01x@acu.edu

Date (Month, Day, Year)

Contact's Name

Contact's Title

Contact's Department or Company

Contact's Street Address, Suite #

Company City, State, Zip Code

Company Phone #

Dear Ms./Mrs./Mr. (Contact's Name)

The first paragraph is **the Grabber and Definer**.

- *Show excitement about the company or position. Demonstrate that you have researched the company and show the value you can add to their firm.*

The second paragraph is **the Convincer**.

- *Refer to the job description. Make connections between your abilities and their specific needs. This is the most critical paragraph of all.*

The third and final paragraph is **the Closer**.

- *Close the letter by stating your intentions and expectations. You may request an interview, set a time when you will call, and include a thank you to the employer.*

Sincerely,

Ben D'Boise (Handwritten Signature- Blue or Black ink only)

Ben D'Boise (Type your full name, positioned four spaces below the closing.)

Enclosure: Résumé (Include when enclosing your résumé. Position 2 spaces below your typed name.)

E-mail Etiquette

Many career postings will request a résumé to be e-mailed. When sending a résumé electronically, the cover letter should be the body of the e-mail. The content of the cover letter should mirror a paper copy, however, e-mail cover letters require an additional degree of etiquette to conform to professional standards.

Process for Writing an E-mail Cover Letter

1. Do not enter a recipient's e-mail address in the "To:" line until you have proofread and thoroughly checked your cover letter. This will avoid any accidental submissions of an unfinished or 'rough' letter.
2. Include the title of the position you are seeking in the subject line of your message.
3. Type your cover letter using plain text format. Some e-mail systems will not allow special formatting. Your e-mail cover letter is the same cover letter that would be sent in a paper copy.
4. State in your cover letter how you have sent the résumé.
For example: "My résumé is attached for your review."
5. Make sure you include a signature with your e-mail address and phone number. Use a professional sounding e-mail address. Do not use a cute or silly address.
6. At the bottom of your cover letter, below your name, type "Attachment: Résumé"
This once again alerts the reader that your résumé is attached to the e-mail.
7. Send the cover letter to yourself first to test the formatting. If it looks professional, then send it to the employer. Make sure the letter is saved in your "Sent" folder as well to allow for easy retrieval should you need to send it again.
8. If you really want the offered position, following up with a paper copy of your résumé and cover letter will give you additional exposure. State in your cover letter that you have recently e-mailed a résumé and are following up with a hard copy.

Things to Remember about E-mail Cover Letters

- * Keep the cover letter short. A generic rule is that the cover letter should not be longer than one screen.
- * Be sure to follow the firm's guidelines for electronic submission. Some firms prefer attachments while others will only accept plain text pasted in the body of the e-mail. Read the job posting for specific instructions.
- * Do not use any graphics such as emoticons.
- * It is tempting to use a casual tone as with other e-mails, but don't be informal. E-mail cover letters should be as formal as paper submissions

(Remember that a cover letter is your first impression!)

Common Mistakes

- * **Length-**
Limit cover letter to one page and be sure to maintain conciseness of your content.
- * **Unprofessional-**
Ex: using a silly or humorous tone. Your letter should be polite and respectful.
- * **Clichés-**
Ex: “Hiring me will be the best thing you ever do.”
- * **Poor use of language-**
Make sure you have more than one person read and revise your letter.
- * **Grammatical errors-**
Ex. “While I was working their, I gained...” or “I have taking several courses in...”
- * **Writing overdone sentences-**
There is no need to use a thesaurus for every word in your letter. You risk using words in the wrong context because the words are large and unfamiliar. Even if the reader understands your meaning, he or she may be put off by your pretentiousness.
- * **Inflating your ego-**
Avoid unqualified, grandiose statements and assumptions. Also, reduce the number of times you use “I” in the letter. Keep it to three or less.
- * **Untargeted-**
Personalize each letter for the specific employer. This will show that you have a genuine interest in the position.
- * **Typographical mistakes-** Most common examples will include:
 - ✓ *Forgetting to change the name of the company each time it appears in the application or body of the letter.*
 - ✓ *Applying for one position and mentioning another position in the body of the letter.*
 - ✓ *Misspelling the employer’s name or title in the address, greeting, or on the envelope.*
 - ✓ *Forgetting to format the word “resume” so that it reads “résumé”.*
 - ✓ *Forgetting appropriate punctuation at the end of a sentence.*
 - ✓ *Using an incorrect abbreviation for a state or a person’s title.*

Cover Letter Checklist

Once you have completed your cover letter, use this checklist to be sure you meet the following guidelines:

RELEVANCE

- Is there a clear reason for each piece of information?
- Has the information been tailored to a specific position? You need a new cover letter for each position and company.

WORD CHOICE

- Is the wording clear and concise?
- Are inappropriate words and clichés avoided?
- Is professional language of the industry used?

MECHANICS

- Are there any errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation?
- Are there any typographical errors?
- Are there any fragments or incomplete sentences?

ORDER OF INFORMATION

- Does the most important information come first?
- Is the organization logical and clear?

COMPLETENESS

- Have you emphasized qualifications specifically mentioned in the job description?
- Is each section concise, yet complete?
- Are accomplishments mentioned related to the skills needed for the job?

LAYOUT

- Is your résumé header at the top? (Optional)
- Is the company address on the top left below your header?
- Does it have a professional look?
- Is it on one page?
- Is it printed on high quality paper?
- Did you include a résumé and type “Enclosure: Résumé” below your typed name?

CONSISTENCY

- Are layout features (headings, spacing, typeface, bullets and ink) handled consistently throughout the document?
- Are the wording, verb tense and punctuation consistent throughout the document?

Sample Cover Letters

Cover letters vary in style and layout.

The following examples are considered business professional.

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Jillian Jones

123 Main Street
Fort Worth, TX 76133
Jxj00a@acu.edu
(321)456-7890

May 15, 2010

Tad Hutcherson
Director of Marketing
AirTran Airways
P.O. Box 908
Dallas, TX 75152

Dear Mr. Hutcherson,

I am very interested in the position of account representative that is posted on AirTran Airways' website. This is exactly the challenge and opportunity for excellence that I am seeking.

The ideal account representative will be knowledgeable of database management technology, experienced in customer relationships, and persuasive. Assuming that strong communication skills and customer service orientation is preferred, I'm happy to tender my résumé for your review.

Recently, I worked as a systems administrator during a summer job in Dallas and as a campus network administrator at Abilene Christian University. These positions required extensive negotiating, customer relations, and a considerable service orientation to handle constrained budgets, unique customer needs, and exceed service expectations. Developing strong, enduring relationships is a passion of mine and I believe that this will be the foundation for my future success in sales.

The attached résumé provides specific details about my education and experience. I will contact you early next week to discuss an opportunity to interview. If you have an earlier interview opening, I can be reached at (321)456-7890.

Cordially,

Jillian Jones

Enclosure: Résumé

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April 29, 2009

Marcus Aurelius
President and Chief Operating Officer
Maximum Solutions, LLP
5 Chestnut Street, Suite 2009
Abilene, TX 79601

Dear Mr. Aurelius,

I am writing to express my interest in the fall Marketing Internship at Maximum Solutions, LLP. Along with having worked in several other unique work experiences, I am currently interning with Enrollment Marketing at Abilene Christian University. In this position, I have learned the value of customer service, expedited returns, quality products, and most importantly, a good marketing plan. Through my past work experiences I have learned to delight in a challenge and work hard in all that I do. On a regular basis I work with a CRM database doing creation and edits of mailers and letters, and I pride myself in being proficient in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

My education has provided me with a good knowledge of management theories and how to apply them in the workplace. My work and global apprentice experiences have taught me how to effectively use marketing strategies.

Thank you for taking the time to review my résumé and considering me for an interview. I look forward to hearing from you by the end of next week.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Portakales

Enclosure: Résumé

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Krystal Hudgins

81 AVENUE Z ❖ ABILENE, TX 79601 ❖ (555)555-5555
❖ KEH05X@ACU.EDU ❖

February 14, 2009

Michelle Blanton
Chief Executive Officer
Wildfire Music Company
123 Wildfire Lane
Nashville, TN. 12345

Dear Mrs. Blanton,

Business and music have played a significant role in my life from a young age. Entertainment, including production, singing, and event coordination with marketing strategies is an area that I have been personally involved in for several years allowing me to have the deepest passion and experience in this industry. Having to take on many responsibilities for myself from a young age, I have developed a strong work ethic. My experiences in market and consumer research are just a few of the qualities that make me a key asset within a team environment. Business and music are two sectors that I excel in. While working a successful internship with CMT this past summer I was able to acquire many skills in personally handling meetings, deadlines, events, and shows. My experience, work ethic, and entrepreneurial and innovative ideas would convey excellence to your organization.

With a long history of excellent performance and work experience, I am completely prepared and qualified to take on any tasks or challenges. My main qualifications are as follows:

While working for *Sheila's Designs*, I was given much authority and responsibility including working with VH1 where I helped personally design and coordinate an episode of *My Big Fat Fabulous Wedding*. Developing great communication and negotiating skills during this time were just a few key outcomes.

Interning at CMT allowed me to have hands on experience in production management. I helped P.A. seven shows and worked on many budgets. I performed a large amount of research on upcoming shows and pilots. By working in production management, I was able to tap into the work of all corollary departments at CMT which has developed my industry skills.

These qualifications show my ability to work well in new environments and be trusted as a valuable employee. I would love to meet with you next week for an interview and can be reached at the phone number and email above. Thank you for your time and consideration and I look forward to hearing from you!

Best Regards,

Krystal Hudgins

Enclosure: Résumé

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January 30, 2009

Ms. Tammie Baugh
Dallas Business Unit Recruiter
KPMG
1234 Tax Assessor Avenue
Fort Worth, Texas 75201

Dear Ms. Baugh:

I am writing to convey that I'm interested in interviewing for one of the KPMG Spring internship opportunities listed in CareerLink. I'm a senior accounting major at Abilene Christian University and currently pursuing my Masters of Accounting while completing my undergraduate degree.

It has always been a goal of mine to work in public accounting and KPMG is at the top of my list. A position in either tax or auditing has been of particular interest to me and I believe that the skills I have learned throughout my education and work experience make me a prime candidate for an internship. As you can see in my enclosed résumé I have had many opportunities to work in internal accounting. Most of my work consisted of reconciliation of company clients' accounts and thorough research into their accuracy. I always met assigned deadlines when completing my work. I had opportunities to work on some amortization schedules and preparation of financials for auditing purposes as well.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you for an interview when you come into town to discuss the possibility of an internship. If you have further questions that I can answer, you can reach me at (555) 444-4444. I will contact you in the next couple of weeks to follow up on this letter. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Matthew Mastalka

Enclosure: Résumé

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Sample E-Mail Cover Letter

Date: Tues, 15 May 2010 19:07:58 -0700 (EDT)
From: Kevin Lee Smith [Ksmith@yahoo.com]
Subject: Seasoned Sales Rep With MBA Ideal for Regional Sales Manager (mtt-01/3439)
To: troy.stirman@marriott.com
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii

Dear Mr. Stirman,

Having exceeded all sales records and sales quotas in my previous positions and recently completed my MBA in marketing from the Stern School of Managerial Leadership at Florida State University, I am an ideal candidate for the regional sales manager position at Marriott Vacation Club International.

As the leading sales representative for Disney Vacation Club, I developed key sales material, trained new sales representatives, and reinvented the way club memberships are sold. My team's revenue was more than double the average for the entire operation.

The vacation club sector is a dynamic and growing industry, and I am convinced I can help Marriott grow its reputation and achieve the dominant position within the industry.

We should meet to discuss the position. I have attached my résumé in a Microsoft Word file and will contact you in the next 10 days to arrange an interview. Should you have any questions before that time, please feel free to call me at 904-555-4321 or e-mail me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cordially,

Kevin Lee Smith

Attachment: Résumé

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Thank You Letter

Basics of a Thank You Letter

- ❖ Establish goodwill, express appreciation, and strengthen your candidacy
- ❖ Send a letter to every person you meet following a site visit
- ❖ Send a letter within 24 hours of the meeting
- ❖ Make sure the letter is hand written and on professional looking stationary
- ❖ Stationary color for business correspondence is typically ivory or light gray
- ❖ If you have a business card, it is fine to include it in the envelope with the letter

Use the same block format as your cover letter including all contact information

- ❖ First paragraph – Express your appreciation for the visit and their time
- ❖ Second paragraph – Reemphasize your specific qualifications meeting their needs
- ❖ Third paragraph – Reiterate your interest and any additional, pertinent information

A thank you letter can mean the difference between you getting the job or not. Don't let something as simple as a thank you letter prevent you from getting the job you are interested in.

SAMPLE:

Dear Mr. Stirman,

June 28, 2009

Thank you so very much for your time and thoughtfulness in meeting with me yesterday. I thoroughly enjoyed our visit, meeting your team, and learning of your company's vision and goals.

Understanding the core position better, I believe my attributes in the areas of project management and situational analysis would lend a credible value to enhance your organization's growth strategy.

It is with great anticipation and interest that I await your follow up phone call. I hope that we will be able to work together in the near future.

Sincerely,

Richard S. Lytle

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Networking Letter

General Information:

- ❖ Networking letters generate *informational* interviews.
- ❖ They are used when a contact has been given to you with no job attached to it.
- ❖ Try to get in to see the employer and then provide them with your résumé.
- ❖ These letters leverage your relationships with those who work with a decision maker.
- ❖ These letters are professional in tone and style and should always be printed on quality stationary.
- ❖ Author a networking letter as if more than one person will read it. It is likely that it will circulate within the organization if the intended recipient likes what they see.
- ❖ Include a business card with the hand written letter whenever possible- these too, will circulate.

Format:

- ❖ First Paragraph – Establish a connection. Tell who gave you the contact's name.
- ❖ Second Paragraph – State your purpose. Tell what your career goals are and what questions you have for your contact. Explain your situation in concise details.
- ❖ Third Paragraph – Ask if you can set up a meeting time and say that YOU will call them. Make sure that your signature includes your contact information (email and phone number).

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