



DAVENPORT
UNIVERSITY

CAREER SERVICES

Creating Letters for Success

THE COVER LETTER

- The **PURPOSE** of a cover letter is to introduce you and your resume. It informs the potential employer of a person's career interest and opens the door for an interview.
- **CUSTOMIZE** cover letters. The "one fits all" letter is not an effective way to market your skills and accomplishments. In each letter, identify the needs and challenges of the targeted position, and highlight your skills and strengths that will meet those needs.
- The **APPEARANCE** of the cover letter is as important as the content. Misspelled words and grammatical and punctuation errors will divert the focus of the prospective employer. Keep the letter to one page with a maximum of three or four paragraphs. Include a space between each paragraph to improve readability. Use the same paper as the resume and matching envelopes.
- **PERSONALIZE** the cover letter by targeting it to a particular person. Investigation may be necessary to find out to whom the letter should be written. Cover letters answering blind ads should be addressed to the "Director of Personnel" or "Personnel Director."
- **SALARY REQUIREMENTS/HISTORY** should not be included in a cover letter unless specifically requested by the employer. When responding to these types of requests, avoid being specific. It is best to cite a range: Salary History-\$18,000 to mid \$20,000 over a two year period, or Salary Requirements-high \$20,000 to low \$30,000, depending on the compensation package.
- The **ELECTRONIC REVOLUTION** has made an impact on how resumes should be prepared. Many companies are using electronic scanners to scan resumes for key words. It is imperative that you know as much information about the position as possible so your resume and cover letter will contain those key words. Most scanners will only scan documents on white paper, with little or no special features such as bolding, italics, or bullet points. Companies will usually let you know if they electronically scan resumes and letters.
- **REMEMBER** to hand sign your letters, preferably with black ink.

ADDRESSING THE ENVELOPE

The address and the return address on the envelope should preferably be printed on the same printer that you used for the letter and resume. The U.S. Postal Service requests that these procedures be followed:

- Use the block style
- Single-space
- Use all caps with no punctuation
- Start the return address two lines from the top edge and three spaces from the left edge for any size envelope
- Attention lines, company names, etc. should be placed above the street address line
- For standard business envelopes, start the address on line 15 and four inches from the left edge
- Use the standard address abbreviations recommended by the U.S. Postal Service
- Use the nine-digit zip code, if possible

ANGELA PHILIPS
6542 MAIN ST
CHICAGO IL 60637

MR DONALD HYATT
THE MONEY STORE
7245 TAYLOR DR SUITE 34
CHICAGO IL 60632-2846

ELEMENTS OF A COVER LETTER

ADDRESS

- Your address
- Date
- Name and business address of a specific hiring executive
- Salutation, ending with a colon (Dear Ms. Baker:)

BODY OF LETTER

- Introductory paragraph
 - Generate interest/Attention getter
 - State employment interest/Interest in the position
 - State how you learned of the job
- Middle paragraph(s)
 - Highlight key strengths and abilities
 - Brief background summary
- Last paragraph(s)
 - Request for action (response or interview)
 - Statement of appreciation

CLOSING

- Professional closing, followed by a comma (i.e.-Sincerely,)
- Skip four spaces (where you will hand sign your name)
- Your name (typed)
- "Enclosure" (if you have enclosed resume)

OTHER TIPS

- Use Block or Modified Block format
- Show pride and enthusiasm for your profession
- Avoid stuffiness and bragging
- Include information relevant to the job you are seeking
- Proofread. Make sure there are no mistakes!

TRAITS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR LETTER

There are many universally admired key personality or behavioral traits that you may want to include in your cover letter. These personal, professional, achievement, and business skills are your passport to success in your job hunt, as interviewers will search for these traits in your letter to learn more about you.

PERSONAL TRAITS

- *Drive*: A desire to get things done/Goal-oriented
- *Motivation*: Enthusiasm and a willingness to ask questions and accept new challenges
- *Communication Skills*: The ability to talk and write effectively to people at all levels
- *Chemistry*: Someone who is a team player
- *Energy*: Someone who always gives that extra effort
- *Determination*: Someone who does not back off when a problem or situation gets tough
- *Confidence*: With every level of employee

PROFESSIONAL TRAITS

- *Reliability*: Not relying on anyone else to ensure the job is done well
- *Honesty/Integrity*: Taking responsibility for your own actions, both good and bad
- *Pride*: Making sure the job is done to the best of your ability; paying attention to details
- *Dedication*: Doing whatever it takes to see a project through to completion, on deadline
- *Analytical*: Weighing the pros and cons, and the short and long term benefits of solution
- *Listening Skills*: Listening and understanding, as opposed to jumping in to speak first

ACHIEVEMENT

- *Money Saved*: Money saved by your thought and efficiency
- *Time Saved*: Every moment saved by your thought and efficiency
- *Money Earned*: Revenue generated for your company

BUSINESS TRAITS

- *Efficiency*: Keeping an eye open for wasted time, effort, resources, and money
- *Economy*: Finding economical solutions to problems
- *Procedures*: Follow the chain of command
- *Profit*: Helping in any way to increase the profit of the company

ACTION VERBS TO USE IN YOUR LETTER

accomplished	consolidated	explained	maintained	remodeled
achieved	contained	extracted	managed	repaired
acted	contracted	fabricated	marketed	represented
adapted	contributed	facilitated	mediated	researched
addressed	controlled	familiarized	moderated	restored
administered	coordinated	fashioned	monitored	restructured
advanced	corresponded	focused	motivated	retrieved
advised	counseled	forecast	negotiated	revitalized
allocated	created	formulated	operated	saved
analyzed	critiqued	founded	organized	scheduled
appraised	cut	generated	originated	schooled
approved	decreased	guided	overhauled	screened
arranged	delegated	headed up	oversaw	set
assembled	demonstrated	identified	performed	shaped
assigned	designed	illustrated	persuaded	solidified
assisted	developed	implemented	planned	solved
attained	devised	improved	prepared	specified
audited	diagnosed	increased	presented	stimulated
authored	directed	indoctrinated	prioritized	streamlined
automated	dispatched	influenced	processed	strengthened
balanced	distinguished	informed	produced	summarized
budgeted	diversified	initiated	programmed	supervised
built	drafted	innovated	projected	surveyed
calculated	edited	inspected	promoted	systemized
catalogued	educated	installed	provided	tabulated
chaired	eliminated	instigated	publicized	taught
clarified	enabled	instituted	published	trained
classified	encouraged	instructed	purchased	translated
coached	engineered	integrated	recommended	traveled
collected	enlisted	interpreted	reconciled	trimmed
compiled	established	interviewed	recorded	upgraded
completed	evaluated	introduced	recruited	validated
composed	examined	invented	reduced	worked
computed	executed	launched	referred	wrote
conceptualized	expanded	lectured	regulated	
conducted	expedited	led	rehabilitated	

COVER LETTER EXAMPLES

2215 Wooddale Drive
Waterville, Maine 04901
February 26, 2008

Mr. Randy Davenport
Central Maine Video, Inc.
432 Highland Drive, Suite 16
Waterville, Maine 04901

Dear Mr. Davenport:

The opportunity presented by Central Maine Video in the February 22nd issue of the Colby Gazette for a marketing position greatly interests me. Please accept my resume in application for this position.

My studies in mass communication at Colby College were designed to be a springboard for my future. Audience and consumer research courses provided me with valuable insight into customer needs and wants. Foreign language and computer skills complement my knowledge base, as well, preparing me for such a challenging marketing position as the one at Central Maine Video, Inc. The advent of customer driven videos in shopping malls and corporate centers is certainly the wave of the future.

Please refer to my enclosed resume for further substantiation of my qualifications, education, and experience. I would welcome the opportunity to become a part of the Central Maine Video marketing team. I can be reached at (616)555-0000 during business hours. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Angelina T. Patterson

Enclosure

123 Seessel Street
Memphis, TN 38128

February 23, 2008

Personnel Director
Dennison's Warehouse
7733 Winchester Drive
Memphis, TN 38134

Dear Personnel Director:

Whether your challenge is to coordinate a disorganized clerical pool, train new secretaries in the latest computer software, plan a luncheon for VIP at the last minute, or budget for next year, I can rise to meet your needs. For this reason, I was pleased to hear that you have an opening for Office Manager from Callie Kendrick, your southeast regional sales manager.

As administrative assistant to the vice-president at Goldstein's Department Stores, Inc., I have faced and conquered all challenges sent my way. I enjoy and excel in handling multiple projects concurrently. The busy environment at Dennison's Warehouse will certainly profit from my office management expertise.

Enclosed you will find a copy of my resume for your review.

If you wish your office to run smoothly, for your employees to be contented, and for projects to be completed ahead of schedule, please contact me. I will meet and exceed your expectations.

Respectfully,

Nancy R. Davidson-White

Enclosure

ELEMENTS OF A THANK YOU/FOLLOW-UP LETTER

After each interview, send a thank you or follow-up letter to your prospective employer within 48 hours. This letter serves several purposes: showing appreciation for the interview, showing your interest in the position, convincing the interviewer that you are the right person for the position.

An effective thank you letter should include:

- A modified block style for a more personal letter
- A thank you to the interviewer for the time and information received
- A recapping of your qualifications and how they parallel the job requirements and contribute to the challenges facing this company
- A restatement of your interest in the position and a request for the position or for a second interview
- Be brief (approximately a half page)

Send a thank you letter even if you did not get the job. Capitalize on the opportunity by letting the interviewer know how impressed you were with the organization and that you would like to be considered for any future positions within the company. This is an excellent way to build your networking contacts!

EXAMPLES OF THANK YOU/FOLLOW-UP LETTERS

Frederick Bryan
33 Knight Avenue
Grand Rapids, MI 49511

February 25, 2008

Mr. James Braun
Accounting Department
ABC Corporation
1 Industry Place
Kentwood, MI 49512

Dear Mr. Braun:

I wanted to thank you for the interview we had on February 23rd. The position that was being offered sounds like something I would be interested in. However, I do understand your reasons for not choosing me for the position, and I thank you very much for your honesty.

Perhaps when you are looking for an account executive with five years of experience instead of ten, you will reconsider my application. I hope the fact that I came in a close second to someone with twice my experience will help you keep me in mind.

I look forward to hearing from you, and thank you again for your time. With your permission I will stay in touch.

Sincerely,

Jane Swift

2913 Baxter Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23465

February 25, 2008

Dr. Julia Edmonds, Director
Technical Design Group
Atlantic Engineering Systems, Inc.
1220 Warwick Avenue
Newport News, VA 23607

Dear Dr. Edmonds:

I want to thank you very much for the opportunity to interview for the marketing assistant position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your company. My enthusiasm for the position and my interest in working for Atlantic Engineering Systems are even stronger as a result of the interview.

You indicated you were looking for a person with ambition, training and some experience. I know I am ambitious and my training has been excellent. My education and cooperative education experiences parallel the job requirements. I am sure that I could make a significant contribution to your firm in the following ways which we discussed during the interview:

- My proven analytical and research skills
- My proficient knowledge of Harvard Graphics and Power Point
- My two years of sales experience in the sportswear industry.

I would like to reiterate my strong interest in the position and in working with you and your staff. You provide the kind of opportunity I seek. Please feel free to call me at (804)685-5555 if I can provide you with any additional information.

Again, thank you for the interview and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Frederick Bryan

VARIATIONS ON A COVER LETTER

EMPLOYMENT NETWORKING LETTER

The most productive method used in the job search is networking. Tap into your friends and acquaintances for the names of people who might be an asset in your job hunting campaign. These sources can lead to other people who might be a link to hidden opportunities. You can call the person directly or write and send a networking letter. A good letter sets the stage for a personal introduction by using a referral name. It will also introduce your career interest and your resume. The elements that should be included in a networking letter are:

- Personal opening stating the name of the person who made the referral and his/her relationship to you. Include the situation that led to the referral.
- Reason for your job search
- Reference to a known position opening or a possible opening (if there is one)
- Resume introduction
- Initiation of a personal contact (meeting or phone call)
- A thank you!

GENERAL BROADCAST LETTER

A job search strategy used by many job hunters is the mass mailing. This method is not usually as effective as the more targeted approach of sending a well written, targeted cover letter and resume. A general broadcast letter is a correspondence which accompanies your resume. The broadcast letter is not as focused as the customized cover letter in which you gear your information to a specific job description advertised by a company, but is a more generic letter designed to appeal to all companies within an industry. Therefore, it is important to have an understanding of the functions of the occupation(s) you are seeking, key skills needed, and valued results.

The broadcast letter possesses the same elements as a cover letter except that the introductory paragraph should have a statement of objective which includes:

- What you want to do
- For whom or with whom you want to do it
- Where you want to do it
- How you can benefit the organization