

Job Search Correspondence

Sending letters to organizations not only introduces you to employers, but also captures their attention, arouses their interests, and hopefully persuades them to consider you as a viable candidate.

There are several types of correspondence a job seeker prepares through his/her job search:

- Application/Inquiry Letter (Cover Letter)
- Thank-you Letter
- Acceptance of Job Offer Letter
- Declining Job Offer Letter
- Withdrawal Letter

In preparing any correspondence:

- Type it neatly on 8-1/2" x 11" bond paper. Keep it clean and free of error corrections.
- Whenever possible, address your letter to a specific person, by name and title, rather than just to a "Personnel Director," "Human Resources Manager" or "Hiring Official." If you don't have his/her name, call the company prior to writing the letter...it will be worth the cost of the phone call!
- In a letter of application or inquiry, tell how you learned of the employer and why you are interested in the organization or school.
- Let the letter reflect your individuality but don't appear familiar, cute, humorous, or overconfident. You are writing to a professional about a subject that is serious to you both.
- Remember to close by taking the initiative – asking for a response, or "close of sale" – and requesting an interview, if appropriate.

Envelopes:

- Four sheets of paper or less can go in a regular, standard #10 envelope – it may cost more than 39 cents if you have a good quality paper.
- You may use the same color of envelope as résumé paper if using standard size envelope.
- Type your envelopes – post office preference is all caps with as little punctuation as possible
- If using 9 x 12 envelope or larger, it can be white or brown. Again, either type on the envelope or type labels for it.

CARI MORAN
123 6TH STREET
PERU NE 68421

HOWARD ROTHER SUPERINTENDENT
TECUMSEH ROCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
STEINAUER NE 68447

Cover Letters (Application/Inquiry)

Types of Cover Letters:

1. **Application Letter** The purpose of this letter is to get your résumé read and to generate an interview.
2. **Letter of Inquiry** The purpose of this letter of inquiry is to prospect for possible vacancies in your occupation, get the résumé read and generate an interview.
3. **Networking Letter** The purpose of this letter is to generate information interviews – not job interviews – which allow you to meet individuals who can give you specific information about your intended career.

1. Application Letter

- A. Study the position description carefully and decide on one or more themes – education, experience, interests, responsibility, etc. – then show persuasively how well you fit the position. Link major job dimensions with your related past performance and experience.
- B. Three or four paragraphs:

First paragraph—Get their attention!

Reveal your purpose (why you are writing), identify the position (specifically name the position you are writing about), and your source (where you heard about the position). Here you must also give some information about the skills, knowledge, experience that you want to share with this employer. A lot of people write that they want to use their education and experience. This statement is highly overused; everyone wants to use these anyway. What is unique or different about who you are and what you are offering the employer?

You may have been referred to this company or employer, ask the person that referred you if you can use their name. Perhaps you did an internship and are now ready to apply for full time employment. State that you were an intern and you worked for (Name of person of Department in which you worked), but please ask your former supervisor if you can use his/her name. In this paragraph say something that lets the employer know you know something about the company; demonstrates you have done your homework.

This paragraph will be brief. If it is too long or doesn't get the reader's attention, you may already be screened out.

Second Paragraph—Outline your strongest qualifications that match the position requirements based on the themes you selected. Provide evidence of your related experiences and accomplishments. Discuss how your background and experiences fit what the employer is looking for in the position description. Use

numbers to quantify information, place them in numerical form not written out. (Example: Increased profits by 55%. Not, increased profits by fifty-five percent.) This is where the paragraph may have to be made into two instead of one. Near the end of the paragraph make reference to your enclosed résumé and portfolio if you have created one.

Third Paragraph—Continue to convince the employer that you have the personal qualities and motivation to perform well in the position. **SELL YOURSELF!** See above.

Fourth Paragraph—Suggest an action that you will take. Request an interview and indicate that you will call during a specific time period to discuss interview possibilities. Show appreciation to the reader for his/her time and consideration. Always repeat your telephone number in case the résumé and cover letter get separated.

2. Letter of Inquiry

Letters of inquiry are used primarily for long-distance searches. This letter is structured similarly to the letter of application, but instead of using position/job description specific information; focus on broader occupational and/or organizational dimensions to describe how your qualifications match the work environment.

3. Networking Letter

Your purpose in seeking informational interviews may vary, but your reasons for wanting to meet with a contact person must be genuine and sincere. Information interviewing is not a magic shortcut to employment; it requires solid preparation, honesty, and much effort. The networking letter is the first step in the informational interviewing process.

First Paragraph—Make the **connection** between you and the reader – alumnus/alumna of your school, mutual acquaintance, similar interest or background, recommendation

Second Paragraph—State your **purpose** without pressuring the reader. Explain your situation briefly.

Third Paragraph—**Request a meeting** at a mutually convenient time and indicate that you will call to make the arrangements.

Your Letters should be...

- One page only
 - Proofread by at least two persons
 - On good quality paper
 - In good form, professional, positive, and brief
-
-

Format

Traditional Application/Inquiry Letter

Your Address

Cit, State, ZIP Code

Date (4 returns) (Needs to be at least 2 returns)

Name and Title of Employer Contact

Organization

Address

City, State, ZIP Code (2 returns)

Dear : (2 returns)

Indicate purpose of letter. Identify position for which you are applying. Mention briefly the source of information concerning the opening. (2 returns)

Explain concisely why you are interested in working for this particular organization and in this type of endeavor. Point out briefly work and/or educational experiences and achievements relevant to the position. Refer to the enclosed résumé. (2 returns)

Restate your interest in the organization and positions open in your area. Indicate your willingness to provide any additional materials that may be required. State your availability for an interview and that you look forward to hearing from the organization in a specified time period to follow up and set a convenient time for an interview. (2 returns)

Complimentary Closing, (4 returns)

(Full Name Signed)

(Full Name Typed) (2 returns)

Enclosure ("s" added if you are including anything with the résumé)

All correspondence needs to be centered on the page. This means that the top and bottom margins should be equal and the right and left margins should be equal. This does not mean that all four margins need to be equal.

You can use the same page heading that you used for your résumé if you would like. Of course, then you would not include your street address, city and state; you would just begin with the date.

Thank-You Letters

This is one of the **MOST IMPORTANT** yet least-used tools in a job search. It is used to express appreciation, and/or strengthen your candidacy. The basic rule of thumb is that **everyone who helps you in any way gets a thank-you letter**. Always mention in a thank-you letter what it was that someone did during the interview that was especially helpful. Did they give you a facility tour? Did they share further information about the position? Did they give you some tips or hints that were helpful in the rest of the interview?

Always type the follow-up/thank-you letter, it is more professional. Make sure the letter indicates to the employer that you paid attention to what was being said, demonstrates your enthusiasm, perhaps discusses how you would be able to contribute, your interest in the position, company, and your appreciation for having been invited for an interview.

Address your follow-up/thank-you letter to the main interviewer. Thank-you letters should be sent **within 24 hours** of the interview. If you have not heard anything from the employer by the time they indicated you would then call them. (See the Follow-up section in the Employment Interview handout)

Again, the same aspects apply to thank-you letters as they do for other correspondence. Refer to other informational boxes throughout this document as well as information on the first page of this handout, about any correspondence.

2913 Baxter Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23456
January 30, 2005

Example

Dr. Julia, Edmonds, Director
Technical Design Group
1220 Warwick Avenue
Newport, VA 23607

Dear Dr. Edmonds:

I want to thank you very much for interviewing me yesterday for the associate engineer position. It was a pleasure meeting with you and learning more about your research and design work.

My enthusiasm for the position and my interest in working for AES were strengthened as a result of the interview. I believe my education and cooperative education experiences fit nicely with the job requirements, and I'm sure I could make a significant contribution to the firm over time.

I want 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) 665-5555 if I can provide you with any additional information.

Again, thank you for the interview and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jasmine M. Sandraman

Make your letters warm and personal, and use them as an opportunity to:

- Re-emphasize your strongest qualifications
- Reiterate your interest in a position
- Provide supplemental information not previously given
- Draw attention to the good match between your qualifications and the job requirements
- Express your sincere appreciation

Acceptance of Job Offer Letter

In this correspondence you will want to basically reiterate the offer that was probably made to you over the phone. It is a way of protecting yourself from the offer changing by the time you receive the company or organizations written offer. Most organizations send a written offer with two copies, they ask you to sign one and return it to them. The other is your copy. Therefore, you are using this letter to accept a job offer and to confirm the terms of your employment (salary, starting date, medical examinations, etc.)

507 Shore Drive
Hampton, VA 23501
April 20, 2005

Mr. Jack Krebs, Division Manager
Data International Corporation
1212 Corporation Lane
Richmond, VA 23332

Dear Mr. Krebs:

I am writing to confirm my acceptance of your employment offer of April 16 and tell you how delighted I am to be joining Data International in Richmond. The work is exactly what I have prepared for and hoped to do. I feel confident I can make a significant contribution to the corporation and I am grateful for the opportunity you have given me.

As we discussed, I will report to work at 8:00 a.m. on May 21 and will have completed the medical examination and drug testing by the start date. Additionally, I shall complete all employment and insurance forms for the new employee orientation on May 22.

I look forward to working with you and your fine team. I appreciate your confidence in me and am very happy to be joining your staff.

Sincerely,

Pamela Jones

The letter:

- Confirms your acceptance of the offer,
- Expresses your appreciation for the opportunity, and
- Positively reinforces the employer's decision to hire you

Declining Job Offer Letter

Candidates may have to decline employment offers that do not fit their career objectives and interests. Rejecting a job offer should be done thoughtfully. Indicate that you have carefully considered the offer and have decided not to accept. Be sure to thank the employer for the offer and for consideration.

You would, as soon as you have made the decision to decline an offer, call the employer and let him/her know that you are no longer interested in the position. It would be inconsiderate to fail to let an employer know if you are no longer interested in an offer that has been made.

Street Address
City, State, Zip
Date

Example

Individuals Name
Title
Employer's Address
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Ms. Employer:

After considerable thought, I have decided not to accept your offer of employment as outlined in your (date) letter. This has been a very difficult decision for me. However, I feel I have made the correct one for this point in my career.

Thank you for your time, effort and consideration. Your confidence in me is sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,

(Written Signature)

Your name typed

Withdrawal Letter

Once you accept a position, you have an ethical obligation to inform all other employers of your decision and to withdraw your employment application from consideration. Your withdrawal letter should express appreciation for the employer's consideration and courtesy. It may be appropriate to state that your decision to go with another organization was based on having a better job fit for this stage in your career. *Do not say that you obtained a better job.*

2626 Chester Lane
Virginia Beach, VA 12366
April 20, 2005

Example

Ms. Melissa Bliss, Executive Director
The Virginia School of Performing Arts
8989 Princess Anne Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23465

Dear Ms. Bliss:

I am writing to inform you that I am withdrawing my application from the Program Coordinator position with the Virginia School of Performing Arts. As I indicated in my interview with you, I have been exploring several employment possibilities. This week I was offered an administrative position with a local city government and, after careful consideration, I decided to accept it. The position provides a very good match for my interests at this point in my career.

I want to thank you very much for interviewing and considering me for your position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning about the innovative community programs you are planning. You have a fine school and I wish you and your staff well.

Sincerely,

Heather Ferguson

Email Address names

Email addresses follow the path of stationary for job search correspondence and greetings on voice mail right through dressing for the interview—job seekers must be clear about projecting an image that fits the role of the position they are attempting to obtain. Job seekers who refuse to separate their professional from their personal images may need to think about the consequences of that decision. Employers are continually seeking candidates that are professional.

Even if the employer is attracted by free-spiritedness initially, the job seeker may be haunted by the employer's first impression throughout his or her tenure with the company (which can be really annoying when one has outgrown whatever "cute" label resulted) and affect advancement opportunities.

Answering Machine Messages

The same information is true about the message that you and your roommates have on your answering machine. If you have something that is unprofessional, or "cute" you may want to consider changing that message when doing a job search.