

THE COVER LETTER

An effective cover letter is a:

- *SALES LETTER* -- an opportunity (apart from your resume) to sell yourself to an employer. If the letter is effective, it will convince the employer to turn the page to read your resume.
- *LETTER OF INTRODUCTION* -- introduces you and your background to the employer. It also lets the employer know what position you are applying for within the organization.
- *TRANSMITTAL LETTER* -- transmits your resume (using a business letter format) to a prospective employer.

Always include a cover letter when you mail or fax your resume to a prospective employer. The only exception is when you personally hand the resume to someone. In that case you yourself act as the cover letter.

Before You Write—Prepare!

Before you can apply for a specific position you need to do some background work. Ask yourself why are you interested in applying for this position? Do your skills, abilities and interest fit with the job and the company? What do you know about the organization? How do you find the answer to these questions — by research and self-assessment.

First, identify your skills, interests and abilities. This can be accomplished in many ways including using the resources available in the Career Center (for example: the CHOICES 2002 database or self-assessment handouts).

Then and this is a critical step, you need to research the company. Use the Internet to begin your search. Many companies have their own websites that will provide you with a great deal of information about their product, the company history, etc.. Or try a web browser like Google.com or Yahoo! The Career Center Library also has books, brochures and employers files on a variety of different

organizations. Another good place to learn more about companies is from newspapers and magazines. Check out The L.A. Times, The Wall Street Journal, Fortune magazine, Business Week etc. for current information about different companies, employment trends and related information.

Attending career days is another way to research companies. Talk to representatives about their organization, gather facts and information, and pick up brochures.

Finally, talk to people; friends, family, alumnae, anyone who can give you “inside” information about the organization.

Carefully read the job description to determine if your skills and abilities will meet the needs of the employer.

Once you have gather all the facts, you’re ready to write a cover letter.

Elements of an Effective Cover Letter.

- *Always use a professional*, business letter format.
- *Always personalized cover letters*. Never mail a letter "to whom it may concern", "sir", or "madam."
- *Write each cover letter for a specific position*. It is not effective to send the same cover letter with just names changed to a variety of employers. Employers can spot a generic letter of this type a mile away.
- *Proofread* the letter for proper spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Each copy must be an original, not a photocopy.
- Whenever possible use a word processor to write the letter.
- Print the letter (using a laser printer) on the same paper as your resume and if possible using the same type font.
- Send the letter and resume in a 9 by 12 envelope.

REMEMBER: PROOFREAD! PROOFREAD! PROOFREAD! before you send out your resume

COVER LETTER FORMAT

Your Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
(Area Code) Phone Number
Email address

Date

Mr. or Ms. Employer
Title
Organization/Company Name
Street Address
City, State and Zip Code

Dear Mr. or Ms. Employer:

Opening paragraph: State why you are writing, name the position or kind of work for which you are applying, and mention how you heard of the opening (if appropriate).

Middle paragraph(s): Refer to research you have conducted on the position and employer, identifying exactly what they are looking for in the ideal candidate. Indicate the skills you have that would meet their needs. Detail specific examples from your experience and/or education that support your skills. Do not refer the reader to your resume. It is your responsibility to highlight the best evidence you have of your qualifications in this section. Indicate why you are the best candidate for the position or internship. If you're applying for an internship discuss how the internship will help you with your future career goals.

Closing paragraph(s): Indicate the action or step you will take next to initiate an interview date.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure (This indicates that your resume is enclosed)

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

345 Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90022
310-954-5000
susasamp@msmc.la.edu

November 24, 2007

Ms. Belinda Ramirez
District Manager, Western Region
Athletic Gear
6792 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 200
Los Angeles, CA 90007

Dear Ms. Ramirez,

I am applying for the position of Assistant Marketing Manager at Athletic Gear. I learned about this position from Mount St. Mary's College's Mount Career Network on-line job posting board.

After reviewing the job description, I have discovered that you are looking for someone who has the ability to work as a member of a team and who can solve problems through creative brainstorming. It is also apparent that you are searching for a individual who is familiar with the athletic wear industry and the needs of customers.

I am confident I have the experience and education to meet your needs. As head of the Mount St. Mary's College Ad Club Team, I motivated its members by giving consistent feedback and encouragement. Due to our outstanding ability to work together as a team, we received a second place award in the 2007 AAF District 15 Competition. While an interning at Myriad Creative, in the Marketing department, I brainstormed ideas for print ads. As a Business Administration major with a marketing emphasis at MSMC, I have been learning a great deal about effective marketing techniques to help a company promote their products. Finally, I am an avid runner and have worn your athletic apparel for many years. I have always found it to be of good quality and well made. Promoting your excellent products is something I know I can do with great enthusiasm and creativity.

I am convinced that I can offer Athletic Gear my consistent track record in teamwork, creativity, and my commitment to athletics. I will be calling you at the end of next week to discuss the possibility of joining your staff.

Sincerely,

Susan Sample

Enclosure