

2009 – 2010

Cover Letter Writing Guide

Career Services Office
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Cover Letters

Cover letters are a part of the employment application process. When preparing a resume to send to an employer, ***always*** include a cover letter. A cover letter is an introduction to the application you are submitting. Each cover letter is geared toward the specific position that you are applying for. In each letter you will introduce yourself, describe your educational and work experiences and how they relate to the position you are applying for.

Cover letters allow you to include information your resume cannot portray (career changes, gaps in employment history, etc.), functioning as the “job objective” on your resume, and gives the employer a snapshot of your personality.

An original cover letter needs to be written for each position (job or internship) you are applying for. Each original cover letter needs to be written specifically to each position description. Even when a cover letter is not specifically asked for, send one. In fact, few employers will seriously consider a resume that does not include a cover letter; therefore, an effective cover letter must be incorporated into your job search strategy to increase your chances of being invited for an interview.

You may see job postings that ask for cover letters using different terminology. These include a letter of application, a letter of interest, or an inquiry.

On the following pages are instructions, samples and ideas that may be helpful as you write cover letters.

Cover Letter Outline/Sections

When writing a cover letter, there are three basic paragraphs that need to be included. Additional paragraphs may be included as needed. The following gives the three essential paragraphs and what information should be included in each paragraph.

Opening Paragraph

State why you are writing, identify the position for which you would like to be considered, and indicate how you heard of the position. If you are sending an interest/inquiry letter, simply indicate the type of work you are seeking. Be specific.

Middle Paragraph(s)

Your goal in this paragraph is to show how you can be useful to this particular organization in this particular position. Describe what strengths you have to offer. You might use one of the following approaches:

- Illustrate the relationship between your skills, experience and the position for which you are applying.
- Describe your previous accomplishments as they relate to the position.
- Identify three reasons for the employer to consider you for the position.
- State why you want to work for their organization.
- Refer the reader to your enclosed resume for additional information.

Closing Paragraph

End your letter by clarifying what will happen next and how they most easily can reach you. Whenever it is possible, you want to take the next step yourself. In addition, thank them for their time and consideration.

Sample Sentences to Use When Writing A Cover Letter

The following are samples of sentences often used in cover letters. Please note that these are samples to help you get started and should not be used verbatim.

First Paragraph Sentences

1. I am interested in a (type of work) position in your (company, agency). I believe that my interest, experience and education support my ability to learn and produce in this area.
2. I am interested in applying for a (teaching position, opportunity in your school district). I will be/am certified to teach (subject or grades).
3. My educational background and experience supports my sincere interest in a career in (Marketing). I am interested in a challenging opportunity with your firm, affording training and eventual advancement to (Marketing) Management.
4. Would you kindly send me an application for a teaching position in your school district? I will graduate in May (year) with a (double) major/s in, and will be certified to teach (subject, grades).
5. I will be living in _____ after the end of this academic semester, and would appreciate your consideration of my application for a position with (company, school system).
6. My interest is in entering a career in _____, and my plan to relocate to _____ support my request for employment consideration with your (firm). I would appreciate receiving information relative to your application procedure.
7. Enclosed please find the application for your (professional opportunity, teaching position) in _____. I have requested that my credential file be forwarded to you in support of my application for the position.
8. Mr./Ms. (name), (title) of (school, company) suggested that I write concerning my interest in (joining your staff, applying for your opening) in _____. In the course of completing my (senior research paper, study) in _____, I became familiar with your organization's work in/with (product, research, clients). I will complete my BS degree in May of this year, and I would like to join your (quality control) staff. My senior capstone (field experience) dealt with (short description).
9. Thank you for the opportunity to talk with you about (school or company name) at Cazenovia College on (date). I am most impressed with your (school system, company, training program) and the opportunities (or challenge) you presented.
10. Thank you for the invitation to visit your (school system, plant operations and office facilities). I am looking forward to visiting with you and continuing our discussion about the (career opportunities, challenges of teaching) at/in (company or town name). I will arrive at (time) on (date).
11. It was certainly a great pleasure to visit with you in/at (town, company) on (date). I was quite favorably impressed by (name of company) plant operations and office facilities, and by the courtesy extended to me by your staff.

Second Paragraph Sentences

1. My educational background, experience in this area, and my sincere interest in the challenges offered support my belief that I have the qualifications you seek.
2. During the past four years of college, I have developed through education and experience a strong desire to find an entry level opportunity in (work area). I feel that I am equipped with educational preparation and valuable experience that supports my qualification for a career in _____.
3. A position with your firm would provide the kind of opportunity and challenge I seek. (I am seeking).
4. With a BPS degree in Management plus varied experience in (traffic) departments of local industries, I am certain I could make a positive contribution to your organization (firm).
5. Your opportunity demands the kind of responsibilities I seek in a career position. My experience and capabilities to supervise, communicate effectively, and to see a task to its successful completion (to "get a job done") would support my contribution to the overall functioning of your operation.
6. While attending school I have worked as a (department aide), (laboratory technician) in _____, and have been involved in a variety of (research, analytical) assignments.
7. I believe that my background and experience would enable me to make a positive contribution to a full-time career position with (type of work) responsibilities.
8. I am confident that I can offer positive contributions to (company, agency name) while being open to the personal growth the experience will undoubtedly provide.
9. Previous experience in a variety of organizations has given me a considerable amount of confidence in my organizational abilities and interpersonal communication skills.
10. I believe the background and attitude that I hold can be an asset in supporting the activities of the (society, council, YMCA).
11. I view the position as described in (publication) as an excellent opportunity to learn and produce, and I would welcome the chance to perform and contribute to (company name) growth as a member of your (department) staff.
12. I find the possibilities for learning and productive challenge in this position extremely attractive.
13. This position would provide an avenue for learning and advancement, which is important to me.
14. The challenges and professional input I foresee in this position represent the type of opportunity I seek.

Third and/or Paragraph Sentences

1. Enclosed is my resume describing my employment and educational background for your consideration.
2. Enclosed is a resume describing my education and employment background in support of my qualifications for a staff opportunity with ABC Company.
3. If you will review the enclosed resume you will see that I have had a strong education and varied experience which is compatible with (supportive of) the requirements of this position.
4. I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss my qualifications in an interview at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you.
5. I look forward to an opportunity to discuss my qualifications in an interview at your convenience (at a time mutually convenient).
6. I appreciate your consideration of my application, and look forward to an opportunity to discuss my qualifications in an interview.
7. I will be looking forward to further communication with you regarding employment with (name of company).
8. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my background and your organization's needs during an interview in the near future.
9. I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss the mutually beneficial possibilities of employment with (company name) in an interview.
10. If you find my qualifications acceptable for your purpose, please contact me at your convenience.
11. Should my qualifications be of interest to you, please suggest arrangements for a personal interview in the near future.
12. I have asked the Cazenovia College Registrar's Office to send you a transcript of my grades in support of my application (per your request).
13. I plan to be in your area (at home) during our spring recess (break) from (April 2nd to April 9th). I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss my qualifications during this time. I look forward to hearing from you relative to an interview date.
14. My thanks again for your time, Ms./Mr. _____. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.
15. Thank you for your consideration. If you require additional information, please call me at _____.

Addressing Salary Requirements for Employment

Some employers will request a salary requirement. You may address the issue in the cover letter. In reporting your salary requirement, it is best to indicate that this can be negotiated or discussed in the interview. This allows you flexibility in determining a fit for the position after you have been interviewed and determined that the position is a good fit for you.

You do not want to “lock” yourself into a salary figure that is either too high for the employer or too little for what the position deserves. If the employer requests a salary requirement, don’t ignore it. Many employers who request salary requirements will not consider an application without a salary requirement. Your salary requirement needs to fit the general range of what are typical earnings for the position.

If you are unsure about the salary ranges for particular positions you can research some general information about specific salaries on the internet at Salary.com, The Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) or O*Net. O*Net can give salary information to the specific geographical area.

Addressing Salary History For Employment

Sometimes an employer will ask applicants to provide salary histories. The employer may use a salary history to gauge the employers' ability to pay an employee at a certain level. When providing a salary history, give the salaries of your recent work experiences or most relevant work experiences.

The salary history can be included in the final or next to last paragraph of your cover letter or as a separate document. Some employers will not consider an application without the requested salary history. So don’t ignore it. If you believe your salary history does not match with the type of positions you are applying for, certainly explain briefly why your salary history may be out of sync with a particular industry and always state that salaries are negotiable.

If you are unsure about the salary ranges for particular positions you can research some general information about salaries on the internet at Salary.com, The Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) or O*Net. O*Net can give salary information to the specific geographical area.

Cover Letter Sample
Jennifer Cecil

Box 1111 ▪ Cazenovia College ▪ Cazenovia NY 13035
8451 Senate Road ▪ Rome, New York 13252
315.598.0000
jacecil@cazenovia.edu

October 1, 2009

Ms. Joan Allen, Managing Editor
Cosmopolitan
300 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019

Dear Ms. Allen:

Enclosed is my resume for your review. I am interested in being considered for an Editorial Internship with Cosmopolitan next summer, 2010. Currently, I am completing my junior year at Cazenovia College where I am a Fashion Merchandising major and an English minor.

This internship is especially appealing to me because of my dual interest in fashion and in journalism. My first love is fashion. Throughout my life I have been attuned to the clothing in the situation, whether that be in watching a TV show or observing groups of people on the street. I believe that how people dress, the fashion/style they choose can impact many aspects of their lives. Fashion allows people to get in touch with their individuality and allows them to possess an air of confidence when dressed in a way that suits their lifestyle.

My second love is writing. Writing has always been the way I express myself. I knew that fashion and writing were in my future for many years and my first “job” was in middle school where I was the Fashion Critic for our school newspaper. The written word is powerful. People believe what they read and I am interested in presenting multiple sides of fashion trends and choices.

An internship with Cosmopolitan would teach and strengthen my writing skills and help me understand how fashion trends evolve. The opportunity to intern for a major fashion publication would allow me to put into practice my two loves.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Cecil

SAMPLE INTERNSHIP COVER LETTER OUTLINE

October 1, 2009

Mr./Ms. First & Last Name, Title
Company Name
Address
City, State Zip

RE: Internship Position

Dear Mr./Ms. (Last Name):

Currently, I am a junior majoring in Management and have a concentration in Sport Management at Cazenovia College. I am seeking an internship with (name of company) for the spring 2009 semester. My career goals are to work in operations preferably in a sports venue. The course work I have had is broad based and has included accounting, marketing and human resource/organizational management.

I would like to share a little bit of my personal and professional background. I have always been involved in sports and participated on many teams in high school and college. I am currently captain of Cazenovia College's Varsity Basketball Team and have learned a great deal about leadership through this experience. It is because of the leadership positions I have been entrusted with that have pointed me toward a management career. I am also a Resident Advisor on campus and am Vice President of the Junior Class.

I feel comfortable speaking and dealing with people from a diverse background and have been able to build excellent rapport with students in my residence hall and with the players and coaches on many sports teams.

I have approximately 5-10 hours per week available to devote to this work. I am very excited about the internship position description I saw advertised for your company at _____.

Thank you for the opportunity to present myself to you. I will call within a week to see whether you need additional information and to arrange an interview, if appropriate.

Sincerely,

Student Name
Address
City, State Zip
Phone
Email

Marketing Internship with AVP Pro Beach Volleyball Tour, Los Angeles, CA: Research event markets to develop local marketing programs, including but not limited to media outlets, popular nightspots and trendy neighborhoods. Send cover letter and resume to: AVP Pro Beach Volleyball Tour, 1 Volleyball Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90000.

Before Cover Letter
Hannah Hubbard
899 Aspin Cove Road
Fort Plain, New York 12222
(518) 777-7777
[hhubbard@cazenovia.edu](mailto:h Hubbard@cazenovia.edu)

October 1, 2009

AVP Pro Beach Volleyball Tour
1 Volleyball Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90000

Dear:

If you do not have a name, use "Dear Hiring Manager:"

Your name is on the top of the page and at the bottom. You do not need to start your letter by stating your name.

Do not use contractions.

What is the writer trying to say? This statement is too general and does not provide insight or demonstration of skills and qualifications.

applying for the marketing internship with AVP Pro Beach Volleyball Tour for the summer of 2010.

The writer needs to speak to her abilities, skills and experiences in these areas.

My name is Hannah Hubbard and I'm interested in receiving a job in the Los Angeles area. My experience with sports throughout the years has allowed me to enjoy all the different sport that are out there. Also being I have much experience working with children and adults has helped me being able to relate to others. I hope to be able to help out and learn more from your organization in Los Angeles.

Grammatical ly, this sentence is incorrect.

In sport management it is better to be well rounded in an area of interest. My interests are sports and I especially enjoy the marketing end and administrative areas. Being that I've had much experience with working with computers and coordinating activities I feel that I can help in the organization in many ways. Knowing that it isn't always easy to work with some people I have learned to keep an open mind and to help in any situation that may be occurring.

I am an enthusiastic person who enjoys to learn more and to experience new opportunities. I hope my qualifications are to your organization's standards and you will qualify me for your internship program so I may be a part of your organization. I hope to hear from you soon and I thank you for your time.

This is not business-letter language. Instead, "I have had a great deal of experience using multiple software programs and in coordinating activities."

Sincerely,

Never word something negatively. Say, "I work well with groups, on teams and individually."

Hannah Hubbard

Overall, this cover letter does not address the specifics of the position. The wording sounds like a conversation rather than a formal business letter.

The purpose of the cover letter is to provide the employer with a demonstration of your writing skills, your ability to translate your experiences and abilities to the position description.

After Cover Letter

Hannah Hubbard

899 Aspin Cove Road
Fort Plain, New York 12222

(518) 777-7777

h Hubbard@cazenovia.edu

October 1, 2009

AVP Pro Volley Ball Tour
1 Volley Ball Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90000

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am interested in being considered for the Marketing position available with the APV Pro Volley Ball Tour. The course work I have completed in sports marketing combined with previous work experience in sports will allow me to create a successful AVP Pro Volley Ball Tour.

As stated on the attached resume, I am a Sport Management major and have had completed the Sport Marketing, Promotion and Sales course. In this course, we learned market research skills and then developed and implemented a marketing plan to increase the number of spectators at our home men's basketball games. In this plan we provided incentives for attending games. We solicited donations from our regional business community and donations included gift certificates to restaurants, bookstores, personal services and a culminating give-away of an Apple I-Pod at the last home game. The results of this marketing plan increased basketball game attendance by 43% and ignited a great spirit and following for our basketball team. Also, I have experience as a camp counselor and have taught volley ball skills and rules to campers ages 10 – 14 for the past three summers.

I believe that sports involvement and support teaches us how to work together toward common goals and teaches us the value of fair play.

The opportunity to discuss the Marketing position with AVP Pro Volley Ball Tour would be greatly appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Hannah Hubbard