

WVU Institute of Technology
Letters Workshop Booklet

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Introduction

While seeking employment, letters are used to inquire, respond, request information, express an interest, thank, accept, or reject an item related to the job campaign process. Letters accompany all document(s) that are mailed, emailed, or faxed for consideration by an employer representative regarding a position candidate.

Well written letters can create excitement and interest in an employment candidacy, however, poorly written letters can prove to be absolutely fatal to a well-planned and well-orchestrated job campaign. (Beatty) When preparing letters candidates are to use their own words, in their own writing style, and ask faculty and friends to review samples prior to mailing. “Best letters spark an employers interest and create an impression of competence”. (Crosby)

The Letter of Application, Resume Letter, or Cover Letter

This letter is the first contact a candidate generally has with an employer, therefore, content and appearance are extremely important. While many see it as “an option in the job finding game” the purpose of this letter is to arouse a readers interest, explain why you are qualified, showcase your skills, and state that you will soon be calling to arrange an appointment. (Kennedy)

Cover letters are three to four paragraphs in length, fit on one page, and include: Contact Information, Date, Inside Address, Salutation, Introduction, Body, Conclusion, Closing, Signature and Enclosure lines.

Conduct as much research as possible and address your letter to a specific person or department manager with the “power to hire”. (Schmidt) State how you learned about the position, using “third party” influences when possible; Why you are interested; Describe your credentials in terms which best fit the employer’s needs; Incorporate terminology found in the job posting; Focus on the employer using words like “offer” and “contribute”; and identify your most marketable features and translate them into benefits, and immediate productivity, for the targeted employer. (Kennedy)

A question regarding whether an employer electronically scans candidate information may indicate the best format. Several “core letters” can be developed and then dressed up in a number of ways ready to target a variety of employers. (Kennedy) An employer commented that one of the best letters (“T” Letter) ever received included a “chart with my requirements on the left and the candidate’s matching qualifications on the right”. (Crosby)

Finally, be sure that the design and look of the cover letter is as professional and inviting as your resume: Use the same paper type, size, and color of your resume; Use the same size and type of font; Use traditional business letter rules; Proofread and spell check. (Schmidt)

Cover Letter Guideline

313 Hopeful Drive
Smithers, WV 25186
June 24, 2003

Ms. Hava Joba
Union Mining Company
236 MacCorkle Ave. SE
Barboursville, MD 10090-1236

Dear Ms. Joba:

First Paragraph – State the reason for your letter by naming the specific position or type of work you are seeking. Indicate from which source (career services office, bulletin board posting, news media, friend, employment service, “third party” influence) you learned of the opening.

Second Paragraph – Refer the reader to the enclosed resume or completed application. Expand upon your qualifications, training, and experience by matching them with needs expressed by the targeted employer located in the job description or learned through personal research. Repeat and reference job description words and phrases. What can you bring to the employer in transferable, employability, and technical skills? Reference what you learned in previous positions – about working in teams, motivating self and others, providing customer service, and completing tasks on time and under budget.

Third Paragraph – Ask for something that will result in an action. You want to complete an application, be presented with an opportunity to forward additional information (transcript, references, recommendations), *and* schedule an interview. Explain when you will be available, or in the area, and when you will be telephoning to arrange a convenient meeting.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I look forward to meeting with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Anita G. Guy

Enclosure

RedHot Cover Letter Anatomy Guide

From: *Cover Letters for Dummies* by Joyce Kennedy

Your Name

Address

(Contact Information) City, State Zip

Telephone

Email Address

URL Web Address

(Email and URL on their own lines)

Date (Align with inside address)

(Inside Address)

Name of Person-who-can-hire-you

RE: (Regarding what the letter is about)

Person's title

(Highlight letter purpose)

Company Name

Address

City, State Zip

(Salutation)

Dear Person-Who-Can-Hire-Me: (Remember to use a colon)

(Introduction)

Interesting opening that says **“Read Me! Read Me!”**

(Body)

Skills and **achievements** that the employer should know about.

(Conclusion)

Thank you and action statement telling when you will be in contact.

(Closing)

Sincerely yours, (Don't forget the comma)

YOUR SIGNATURE (Sign Here!, Sign Here!, Sign Here!)

Your name (Do not use this line if your name is at top of page)

(Enclosure line)

Enclosure: Resume

The Thank You Letter

The absolutely critical “post-interview” thank you note/letter has several purposes: It helps the employer to remember you; it can reiterate your interest in further talks; it can correct any impression you left behind; and it presents an opportunity to add information or highlight things discussed in the interview. “The importance of sending a thank you to everyone is one of the most essential steps in the entire job campaign, *yet it is the most overlooked step in the entire process.*” (Bolles)

How about sending a “pre-interview” thank you? Imagine the impression made with a well-written letter confirming the meeting time/location and thanking the employer for the appointment. (Kennedy) What a dynamic way to begin an interview, because you were the only candidate who took the time.

Thank you notes and letters make you look well mannered and always leave a positive impression. (Kennedy) Thank yous are also appropriate to employer representatives met at career/job fairs, persons serving as your references, third party referrals, and to those persons who simply supply favors along the way.

The Acceptance Letter

“The *acceptance letter*’s mission is not only to thank the hiring party, but also to define the terms of your employment as agreed upon in your job offer. Such terms include: salary, job title, benefits, and contract term. While this letter may seem like overkill, it is actually a cover-yourself letter – your terms are in writing just in case anything goes awry.” (Kennedy)

The Rejection Letter

The *rejection letter* will bring closure to your job hunt. It is only common courtesy to notify employers placed “on hold” that you have accepted employment. Failure to answer other employers’ job offers may result in you creating enemies and situations that you may have to face sometime in the future. “Courteously thank employers for their time, interviews, and consideration; Inform them that you have accepted another offer for employment and are no longer available (you may not wish to say from whom); and include any hopes you may have to talk with them again in the future”. (Kennedy)

Thank You for Job Interview

From: *Cover Letters for Dummies* by Joyce Kennedy

J. Michael Smith
Box 205 Co-Ed Hall
WVU Institute of Technology
Montgomery, WV 25136
(304) 442-5555
jmc@coldmail.com
www.eeng.net

Mr. Brent C. Nabby, Vice-President
21st Century Developments
5555 Hassu Parkway
Trenton, NY 33226
September 30, 2003

Dear Mr. Nabby:

(Opens with personable reminder of interview)

Thank you for the opportunity to interview for a sub-contractor position. I was impressed with the warmth and efficiency of your offices and your genuine interest in acquainting me with your staff and company goals.

(Reviews points made during interview)

During our discussion, I told you about my background in sub-contractor coordinating. Although our conversation focused on hiring policies, top contacts, and scheduling strategies, I wanted to underscore our mutual priorities. The latest issue of *Building Issues* bring to my attention a priority we share: "Beating the competition's quality by miles." (Includes topics not covered in interview - use company motto)

I have always strived to reach high quality results by using the most appropriate materials and by studying the quality of materials used by other companies. Among my favorite suppliers, you may recognize the following names: Namath Re-bar, Drywall By-the-Mile, and Lionel Fixtures. (Mentions contacts not on resume)

Such high standards have been so central in my work that I feel compelled to join such a demanding company such as yours. Thanks again for the interview. I look forward to contacting you next week to check on the progress of your search.

(Signs off with intent to follow-up)

Sincerely,

Sample Thank You Letter
"The Perfect Cover Letter"
By Richard H. Beatty

115 Juniper Road
Mobile, AL 36688
January 23, 2003

Ms. Linda G. Baker
Director of Employment
National Chemical Company
120 Erie Road
Sandusky, OH 44870

Dear Ms. Baker:

I wanted to let you know how much I appreciated the opportunity to interview with National Chemical for the position of Principal Scientist in Absorbant Technology. This is an exciting position, and I want to reaffirm my strong interest in this assignment.

In particular, I enjoyed meeting Jane Johnson, Davis Keller, and Michael Ortiz, and appreciated their time in explaining the position of Principal Scientist and the function of Absorbant Technology to me. This was most enlightening and served to peak my interest in working as a part of this group.

I feel that my Ph.D. in Materials Science and 6 years of experience in absorbancy research with Dixon Laboratories should serve me well in meeting the requirements of your position. Additionally, I feel my strong background in polymer chemistry should prove beneficial to the Group's efforts.

Again, Ms. Baker, I appreciated the opportunity to visit with you. Thank you for your hospitality, and I look forward to hearing from you concerning the outcome of our discussions.

Sincerely,

Garth R. Carter

Mmg

Acceptance Letter

From: *Cover Letters for Dummies* by Joyce Kennedy

P.O. Box 3456
Troy, MI 48098
April 1, 2003

(More than a letter, he incorporates his understanding of the conditions offered. While not legally binding, if a dispute occurs, there is paperwork to confirm the offer)

Mr. Drew McCallister
Sales and Marketing
Walter and Sons Construction Co.
5577 Fairview Drive
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Dear Mr. McCallister:

I am pleased to accept your offer for the position of Assistant Supervisor of sales and marketing for Walter and Sons Construction at a starting salary of \$3,000 per month, plus reimbursement for relocation costs up to a maximum of \$12,000. As we discussed, I will receive the standard benefits package, which includes health coverage and retirement contributions.

I am looking forward to extending my ideas and expertise into the sales and marketing division of your company. My extensive background in sales and marketing will allow me to get started immediately with minimal training. Within three weeks, as we predicted, I should know the company well enough to relieve you and Ms. Espinoza of the bulk of the marketing and sales responsibilities so you can focus more intently on the regional expansion of Walter and Sons Construction.

As you are aware, I am currently securing my living situation to relocate to Grand Rapids. I expect to conclude this endeavor by mid-March, in which case I will be able to begin working by May 28, 2003. If this arrangement is inconvenient or you would like to present another option, please let me know. I will contact you by May 2 to finalize arrangements.

I am excited to join your team and thank you for the opportunity to participate in the growth of Walter and Sons Construction.

Thankfully yours,

Brooke Lancaster

Brooke Lancaster
(748) 356-9835

Rejection Letter

From: *Cover Letters for Dummies* by Joyce Kennedy

Trevor Taylor
3456 Griffin Place
Apt 5
Rogers, AR 72790
January 3, 2003

Mr. Grant Focault
Human Resources Department
GreenTree Corporation
506 N Smith Street
Rupert, MD 83350

Dear Mr. Focault:

I would like to extend my thanks for you offering me the position of Features Editor with the *Maryland Daily Times*. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to discuss this position with you.

I was quite impressed with you and your team; however, since we last talked, I have accepted an editorial position with a publisher in my area.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to learn about your newspaper and its operations. I am confident that your success will extend into future endeavors.

Best Regards,

Trevor Taylor

Trevor Taylor

(Note the grace that is used to turn down this job offer. Mr. Focault may be promoted to an even bigger newspaper and offer Mr. Taylor an even better job someday.)

Other Letters

The Blind Ad Letter	Job Hotline Reply Letter
The Employment Service Letter	The Networking Letter
The Follow-Up Letter	The Broadcast letter
The Recommendation Letter	The Resurrection Letter

For additional information consult:

Cover Letters for Dummies
by Joyce Lain Kennedy

Using Electronic Media

Applying for Positions Advertised on the Internet

The *Guide to Internet Job Searching* recommends:

- Prepare and store resumes and letters in a **text format**, sometimes called ASCII or DOS text, for sending via e-mail. No word processing or PostScript files and keep width to 70 columns (characters).
- Send your resume and cover letter in one file.
- Use the advertised job title as the “Subject” line, including any relevant job posting numbers.
- Some employers who advertise online do not accept resumes via e-mail. It is very important to read the *entire* posting and respond according to the instructions given.

Ten Tips to Buddy Up to Computers

Cover Letters for Dummies recommends:

Avoid Underlining	Use White or Off-White Paper
Avoid Script and Italics	Use Key Words
Avoid Graphics	Separate E-Mail Addresses
No Folds, No Staples	No Vertical Lines
Skip Hollow Bullets	Use Parentheses Around Telephone Area Code

On-Line Assistance

The Internet is full of resume writing advice, however, remember that websites are not filtered for accuracy or timeliness. (Crosby) Some established sites are:

- JobSmart: Resumes and Cover Letters
jobsmart.org/tools/resume
- The Riley Guide
rileyguide.com
- The Quintessential Guide to Career Resources
quintcareers.com
- Type “*Employment Letters*” into browser and then hit “*Search*”

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