

Cover Letter

Instructions, Template, & Samples

The cover letter is a crucial component of your job application materials. In most cases, a cover letter should accompany the resume you submit to an employer. You can also send a cover letter as an attachment when submitting your resume on the internet. A cover letter serves two important functions.

- 1) It provides a way to spotlight accomplishments which are *pertinent* to the job.
- 2) It sets you apart from the other applicants who do *not* provide a cover letter. A cover letter personalizes your application by allowing you to discuss the qualifications you have in relation to what the employer wants.

Getting Started

Know that writing a cover letter takes time and careful thought. In a resume, you **list** your educational and professional background. In a cover letter, however, you must **describe** your qualifications. A cover letter is a better gauge of your writing skills (a very important skill to most employers).

Obtain a job description of the desired position and find as many details as possible (such as the organization's website). Also review the organization's site to learn of its "core values", "mission", "statement of purpose", "customer service goals", etc. to learn what traits are emphasized in that organization.

The position description will probably tell you precisely what attributes the employer is seeking. Do not copy the position description word-for-word in your cover letter; but use it as a guide to discuss your qualifications.

Job ad: "Acme Bricks is seeking an energetic, personable individual to sell building materials."

Cover letter: While attending UCO, I was involved in several campus activities, including a year as Vice President of the Marketing Club. As Vice President, I managed the annual candy bar sale, which raised more than \$1,200.

Result: Now Acme Bricks knows you are outgoing, can work with others, and have sales experience.

Important Points

- Address the cover letter to the person who is most likely to read it. If a contact person is not listed in the job advertisement, you can contact the company to ask who will be doing the hiring for the position. If that information cannot be released, address it to the human resources manager.
- Cover letters may be **solicited** (responding to an advertised position) or **unsolicited** (inquiring about possible job opportunities with an employer). Write your cover letter accordingly.

Structure of a Cover Letter

- **Heading.** Include your address, and date; name, title, and address of employer. Make sure your spelling and punctuation are correct.
- **Body.** 1st paragraph...toot their horn. 2nd paragraph...toot your horn. 3rd paragraph...when to meet.

Cover Letter Template

You may list your name and address heading at the top, i.e. same "letterhead" as your resume, or...

Your street address or PO Box

Your city, state and zip code

Date you will mail letter

Name of contact person (if possible)

Title of Company/Organization

Their street address or PO Box

Their city, state and zip code

Dear Ms., Mr. or Dr. _____: (Never address to "To Whom It May Concern," or "Dear Sir or Madam." If you absolutely cannot obtain a person's name, then use the salutation "Dear Personnel Director:" "Dear Director", "Dear Prospective Employer" or similar.)

1st Paragraph...toot their horn

Purpose: Using knowledge of the employer, state what aspects of the employer interest you or those you admire. This should be no more than 5 sentences.

For a Solicited/Advertised position:

*Name the position for which you are applying or if you know of a specific vacancy within the organization, also tell how you learned about the position (include date advertised).

* Mention the name of the person (if any) who referred you to the organization and vacancy - preferably a colleague of the contact person if applicable.

For Unsolicited/Non-Advertised position:

* Mention the career field or position you are seeking employment. You can also mention any specific knowledge of the company or include why you are interested in working for their company/organization.

2nd Paragraph...toot your horn

Purpose: demonstrate your ability to add value to the company and highlight your key strengths and abilities, as well as related experience and education. This should be no more than 5 sentences.

* State the skills/strengths you will bring to the job that parallels those qualities needed to succeed in the position for which you are applying. Give brief examples of your skills and any related work experience and/or education. Explain that these skills will transfer to the position for which you are applying.

3rd Paragraph...when to meet

Purpose: compel or ensure follow-up action and extend your appreciation for being considered.

*Refer to documents enclosed or available, such as your resume, reference letters, etc.

*Make it very easy for the person to contact you. Even though it is on your resume, you should list the phone number where you can be reached. Thank him/her for his/her time and consideration of your application.

*State that you are available for an interview at his/her convenience.

Sincerely, (or "Respectfully,")

Sign your name in ink

Type your name (4 spaces down from closing, and make sure it matches the name on your resume and school transcripts)

Enclosure (1 space down from name)

110 South Bryant
Edmond, OK 73034
May 5, 2008

Suzanne L. Baker
Technical Recruiter
MCI Telecommunications
210 Park Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Dear Ms. Baker:

MCI Telecommunications' advances in technology make your COBOL programmer position an exciting opportunity. The core value of innovation is a trait to be admired.

Next month I will graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Oklahoma. I have served as a Student Assistant in the UCO Information Technology department, where I maintain online and batch systems using COBOL IMS. This has allowed me to interact with a variety of system users. My relevant coursework includes classes in COBOL, C, Visual Basic, Programming I and II, as well as Programming Languages, but more importantly I am current on industry trends from affiliation with a professional student organization.

It would be my honor to discuss at your convenience my abilities and your employment opportunity. Please call me at (405) 555-8122. Thank you greatly for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sign name here

Jennifer Thompson

Enclosure

Mark Adams
230 Garth Brooks Avenue
Yukon, OK 73024
(405) 555-1212

June 6, 2008

Mr. Jim Kern
Human Resources Manager
Fleming Companies, Inc.
P.O. Box 26647
Oklahoma City, OK 73126

Dear Mr. Kern:

For the past several months, I have been following the media coverage of Fleming Companies, Inc., and know that it is a dynamic and exciting company. With my work experience and educational background, I am qualified to be an entry-level Buyer with your first rate enterprise. My resume is enclosed for your review.

This past December, I received a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance from University of Central Oklahoma. I maintained a 3.8 grade point average while working part-time throughout my degree.

During my senior year, I worked as a produce manager for Albertson's. I was responsible for the quality, purchasing, and display of all produce items for a high traffic store. In addition, I supervised a team of 3 part-time assistants.

I would appreciate an opportunity to visit with you to discuss my qualifications further. My telephone number is (405) 555-5555. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sign name here

Mark Adams

Enclosure