



GUIDE TO CREATING A PROFESSIONAL COVER LETTER

WHY DO I NEED A COVER LETTER?

Cover letters introduce your résumé and entice the reader to read it. They are sometimes requested by a prospective employer, but should always accompany any mailed résumé.

The contents will change with each position to which you apply, you will use the cover letter to show the employer how your skills and experience meet the needs of their position. You will need to show specifics and make that connection each time you apply.

Cover letters give job candidates an advantage:

- *They are used for job and internship applications, and grad school admission*
- *They allow an applicant to show **awareness** of the prospective organization's goals, mission, or objectives and how the applicant can **meet employers' needs** or **succeed in academic or experiential learning programs***
- *They gives an opportunity to provide more specific and related information than your résumé can*
- *They will change with **each position to which one applies***



Dr. Hester Young, CPRW
Ms. Nicole Copland, CPRW

hyoung@csuniv.edu
ncopland@csuniv.edu

843-863-8019

Integrating Faith in Learning, Leading and Serving

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Purpose of a Cover Letter	3
Suggestions for an Effective Cover Letter.....	3
Guidelines for a Cover Letter	4
Sample Cover Letter for Recent Grad	5
Sample Cover Letter for Internship	6
Sample Referral Cover Letter	7
Sample Cover Letter for Cold Contact	8
Sample Ad Response Cover Letter	9
Sample Two-Column Cover Letter.....	10
Sample E-mail Cover Letter	11
Sample Cover Letter in Response to Salary Requirement Request.....	12
Sample Cover Letter for a Military Transition to a Civilian Job.....	13
Sample Cover Letter to Recruiter	14
Sample Cover Letter for Artist	15
Sample Cover Letter for Minister	16
Submit Your Cover Letter for an Online Critique	17
Online Application Submission	17

COVER LETTERS

The purpose of a cover letter is to entice potential employers into reading your resume and inviting you for an interview. Your cover letter should be a one-page business letter explaining your skills and experience as they relate to the specific job for which you are applying. Always include a cover letter with your resume.

A cover letter gives you the unique opportunity to:

- demonstrate your knowledge of the organization by referring to the research you have conducted regarding that company.
- explain what you can do for the company rather than what the company can do for you.
- relate your skills to the requirements of the job by explaining and highlighting accomplishments mentioned in your resume.
- specifically request an interview.

The average length that an employer looks at a cover letter is about eight seconds. Therefore, **make sure that your cover letter is brief, yet informative.** It should include three recognizable parts: the opening, which explains why you are writing; the main body, which lists two or three of your major accomplishments and gives the reader a good reason to invite you for an interview; and the closing, which expresses a desire for future communication. Make sure that your cover letter draws a connection between the needs of the company you are applying to and the specific skills you can offer.

Suggestions for an effective cover letter:

1. Always direct your letter to a specific person, preferably an individual with hiring authority. If you do not know to whom you should write, call the company/school/agency operator for the name of the appropriate person to contact. Be certain to spell his or her name correctly and to use his or her proper title. Also, if the individual is a woman, refer to her as “Ms.” rather than “Mrs.” or “Miss” unless you know her marital status for certain.
2. Tailor your letter for the specific job and organization. Avoid using a nonpersonalized form letter.
3. Use simple and direct language. Be as concise as possible. Avoid sounding too aggressive, humorous, or informal. Refrain from using slang and abbreviations.
4. Do not exaggerate your accomplishments, but be positive and confident about your qualifications and talents. Provide specific examples to support and illustrate your qualifications.
5. Keep your cover letter to one page of three to five paragraphs.
6. Have several people proofread your letter for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and typographical errors. Your letter must be neat and absolutely error free. Realize that the reader will view the cover letter as an example of your best written communication skills.
7. Do not reproduce your cover letter. Each letter should be uniquely tailored to the employer and typed for every application you submit. An employer wants to think that his or her organization is the most important one in your search.
8. Use traditional business letterform on standard size (8 ½” x 11”) bond paper that matches your resume. Observe margins and spacing, and always remember to sign your letter. If you can reproduce the same heading (your name, address, and phone number) you used on your resume as the heading on your cover letter, the two will complement each other and look professional when you hand them out together to potential employers.
9. Edit your cover letter carefully. Is it interesting and persuasive? Does it include important aspects of your college experience, your pertinent qualifications, and a bit of your personality? Read it from the employer’s perspective: “Why should I hire you?”

Guidelines for a Cover Letter

- Minimum of 3 paragraphs.
- Leave at least a one-inch margin all around.
- Center the letter from top to bottom on the page.
- Use a 10-12 point font that is easy to read. Do not use bold.

Here is one format:

Your Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

June 3, 2001
(insert one line of space)

Mr. or Ms. First Name, Last Name
Title of Employer
Organization
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
(insert one line of space)

Dear Mr. or Mrs. Employer:
(insert one line of space)

First paragraph: Your opening should invite and entice the employer. State why you are writing (usually to apply for a position). If you are responding to a known opening, explain how you heard about it (name the publication and date). If it was through a personal reference, tell the employer about it immediately. If you are writing an unsolicited letter to an organization with no announced openings, be as specific as possible about the type of job you are seeking. Tell why you are particularly interested in working for the company.
(insert one line of space between each paragraph)

Second paragraph: Present your strongest and most relevant qualifications for the job, in decreasing order of importance. Keep the employer's perspective in mind! Expand on information presented in your resume; do not merely repeat it. Use specific examples in demonstrating what you can do for the employer instead of merely listing skills you have or relevant courses you have taken. Indicate how your skills tie into the organization. Mention briefly what you know about the company or some aspect of it. Remember that the reader will consider this cover letter to be an example of your writing skills!
(insert one line of space between each paragraph)

Third paragraph: Close by expressing, once more, your interest in the position and why you feel qualified. Suggest that you would enjoy the opportunity to meet in person and learn more about how you can contribute to that organization. Thank the employer for considering your resume.
(insert one line of space)

Sincerely,
(insert 4 lines of space between 'Sincerely' and your typed signature)

(Your Handwritten Signature)

Your Typewritten Signature
(insert one line of space before enclosure)

Enclosure (this indicates that a resume or application is enclosed)

Sample Cover Letter for Recent Grad

YOUR NAME
7 Apple Court
Eugene, OR 97401
000-000-0303

Mr. Archie Weatherby
California Investments, Inc.
25 Sacramento Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mr. Weatherby:

My outgoing personality, my sales experience, and my recently completed education make me a strong candidate for the position as Insurance Broker for California Investments, Inc. Attached is my résumé for this position. Your organization's mission and community awareness are in agreement with my passion and goals.

Although a recent graduate, I've put myself through these schools by working such jobs as radio advertising sales and newspaper subscription sales, all of which enhanced my formal education. These experiences have enhanced my leadership and customer service skills so important to the industry. I have developed the maturity, skills, and abilities to embark on a career in insurance brokering. My desire is to accomplish this in my home state of California.

I will be in California at the end of this month, and I would consider it a privilege to interview for the position of Insurance Broker at California Investments. I will follow up this letter with a phone call to arrange a time to meet with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Oakley

Encl: Résumé

Sample Cover Letter for an Internship

YOUR NAME
2838 Campor Lane
DeLand, FL 32720
386-555-2922
E-mail

Ms. Amanda Paulson
Universal Orlando
1000 Universal Studios Plaza
Orlando, Florida 00000-7610

Dear Ms. Paulson:

My unique mix of previous work experience and my status as a Stetson University business student in my junior year studying marketing make me an ideal candidate for a summer internship with Universal Orlando. My experience in sales and customer relationship management, combined with my courses in marketing, has convinced me that hospitality marketing is a viable career option I would like to explore.

More importantly, an internship with Universal Orlando would be mutually beneficial. Your company has an excellent reputation for customer satisfaction, and I know that the combination of my experience, education, and motivation to excel will make me an asset to your marketing department.

I am sure that it would be worthwhile for us to meet. I will contact you within a week to arrange a meeting. Should you have any questions before that time, you may reach me via phone (386-555-2922) or via e-mail (christina@stetson.xxx).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christina Appleprogram

Enclosure

Sample Referral Cover Letter

YOUR NAME
110 First Street
Alexandria, VA 22306
(802) 555-5544

Mr. Henry Fouche
Best Plans Publicity, Inc.
800 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mr. Fouche:

Nancy Jones, of Green & Associates Advertising, suggested I contact you regarding the possible public relations opening in your firm. As an editor/writer for Alexandria's city magazine, I've developed my talent and experience as a public relations writer. Because the staff is very small, I've worn a number of hats, including: developing the editorial format and individual story concepts, writing numerous articles, editing copy, laying out the magazine, and supervising production.

Prior to my current position, I was highly involved in the public relations industry, working for Jones & Jones, where I prepared numerous press releases and media guides, as well as managing several major direct mail campaigns. My high degree of motivation has been recognized by my previous employers who have quickly promoted me to positions of greater responsibility. I was promoted from assistant editor to editor of *Alexandria Monthly* after only five months.

I am eager to talk with you about the contribution I could make to your firm. I will call you the week of April 25th to see if we can find a mutual time and date to get together and discuss the possibility. Your consideration is greatly appreciated.

Cordially,

Mary Dogood

Enclosure

Sample Cover Letter for a Cold Contact

YOUR NAME
23 Hickory Tree Way
Belle Mead, NJ 08502
(908) 555-7495
E-mail

September 12, 2006

Ms. Kristin Heller
The Research Institute
34 Marketing Court
Princeton, NJ 08540

Dear Ms. Heller:

As marketing companies are increasingly called upon to supply information on magazine readership to publishers, there is a growing need for trained and experienced professionals in the field. Through my marketing and research experiences, I am certain I could give you valuable assistance in satisfying research demands, managing key projects, and improving the marketing tools you currently use.

My master's thesis particularly dealt with improving marketing research studies so they can better define magazine audiences to potential advertisers. I will be completing my master's degree in December and would be interested in making a significant contribution to the Research Institute's profitability in a marketing/research capacity.

I am sure my services would be useful to you, and I will call you in early October to discuss an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Scott Mommanis

Enclosure

Sample Ad Response Cover Letter

YOUR NAME
1090 Peachtree Lane, #4
Atlanta, GA 30303
404/555-3030
E-mail

Ms. Judy Sumner
Atlanta Board of Education
45 Peachtree Blvd.
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Ms. Sumner:

Perhaps I am the multitalented teacher you seek in your Multitalented Teacher advertisement in today's *Atlanta Constitution*. I'm a versatile teacher, ready to substitute, if necessary, as early as next week. I have the solid teaching experience you specify as well as the strong computer skills you desire.

I am presently affiliated with a highly regarded private elementary school. Mr. Craig, the headmaster, will certainly give you a good reference. The details of your advertisement suggest to me that the position will involve many of the same responsibilities that I am currently performing.

In addition to the planning, administration, and student-parent counseling duties I highlight in my resume, please note that I have a master's degree as well as a teaching certificate from the state of Georgia.

Knowing how frantic you must be without a fifth grade teacher, I will call you in a few days. Or if you agree upon reviewing my letter and resume that I am the teacher you need, call me at the home number listed above, or at 555-7327 during business hours.

Thanking you most sincerely for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Maria Souza

Enclosure

Sample Two-Column Cover Letter

Department of Human Resources
Davida Darwin
1900 Cassiopeia Avenue
Cockeysville, MD 21030

Re: Posting 101 Associate Director II

Dear Ms. Darwin:

When I read your ad for an Associate Director II on the Maryland works job site, I couldn't help noticing how well your requirements align with my experience, education, skills, and background. While my enclosed resume provides a good overview of my strengths and achievements, I have also listed some of your specific requirements for the position and my applicable skills:

You require:

Ability to coordinate and oversee the work of subordinates.

Ability to strategically plan, develop and implement programs and operations toward achievement of team's mission, goals, and objectives.

The analytical skills to perform needs assessments, evaluate current programs, and initiate changes or adjustments to current systems and improve operations.

Problem-solving and decision-making abilities.

Financial and personnel management expertise.

Interpersonal and communication skills that promote ability to serve as a liaison and resource.

I offer:

Experience in supervising 25 office employees and ensuring staff efficiency as a public-health program director.

Experience developing and implementing treatment programs as a public-health program director.

Success in having brought order out of chaos at an inner-city health clinic and vastly improving processes there.

Success in solving numerous problems at inner-city clinic, such as reducing number of emergency and drug-seeking patients; lobbying for HIV-information dissemination; and increasing number of patients that could be given routine care.

Expertise in both areas, through public-health and office-management background.

Significant experience giving presentations, speaking persuasively, and interacting successfully with diverse individuals.

Since my experience and expertise fit your requirements so closely, I am clearly one of the people you'll want to see. I plan to contact you to follow up on this letter and see if we can arrange a meeting. In the meantime, please feel free to call me at my home number listed above. I look forward to our meeting. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Bonnie Ell

Enclosure

Sample E-mail Cover Letter

Date: Tues, 15 May 2007 19:52:59 -0700 (EDT)

From: Kevin Lee Smith [ksmith@yahoo.com]

Subject: Seasoned Sales Rep With MBA Ideal for Regional Sales Manager (mtt-01/3439)

To: scott.hent@mscott.com

Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii

Dear Mr. Hent:

Having broken sales records and exceeded sales quotas in all my previous positions and recently completed my MBA in marketing from the Stern School of Managerial Leadership at Florida State University, I am an ideal candidate for the regional sales manager position at Marriott Vacation Club International.

As the leading sales representative for Disney Vacation Club, I developed key sales material, trained new sales reps, and reinvented the way club memberships are sold. My team's revenue was more than double the average for the entire operation.

The vacation club industry is a dynamic and growing industry, and I am convinced I can help Marriott grow its reputation and dominant position in the industry.

We should meet to discuss the position. I will contact you in the next 10 days to arrange an interview. Should you have any questions before that time, please feel free to call me at 904-555-2341 or e-mail me at ksmith@yahoo.com. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cordially,

Kevin Smith

Enclosure

Sample Cover Letter in Response to Salary Requirement Request

YOUR NAME
7 Apple Court
Eugene, OR 97401
503-555-0303
E-mail

Ms. Deanna Kindig
Dell, Inc.
One Dell Way
Round Rock, TX 70000

Dear Ms. Kindig:

My varied customer service and training experience, along with my extensive educational background, make me an ideal candidate for the corporate trainer position posted in your career center.

Much of my previous work experience has been in customer service, and the tools and techniques I have learned from this industry apply directly to the skills corporate trainers need -- the skills you seek -- speaking effectively, facilitating group discussion, solving problems, developing rapport, organizing, meeting goals, and managing groups.

My extensive educational background -- a bachelor's degree in marketing, with minors in human resources and communications, and postgraduate work in teaching and counseling -- will help me add new perspectives and ideas to your department.

I know I can be a key player on your training team, and I would like the chance to prove that to you.

Per your request, an acceptable salary range for this job, based on the description and my research, is \$45,000-\$50,000, not including benefits or supplements. My requirement is flexible and negotiable, depending on such factors as additional benefits, faster salary reviews, and increased advancement opportunities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Oakley

Encl: Résumé

Sample Cover Letter for a Military Transition to a Civilian Job

YOUR NAME
1250 Garden State Court
Cliffwood, NJ 07721
(848) 555-5784
E-mail

Ms. Joey Mondaca
B & B Air Conditioning and Heating
209 Bath Ave
Long Branch, NJ 07740-6102

Dear Ms. Mondaca:

My 10 years of comprehensive air conditioning training and a successful technical career with the U.S. Army, where I progressed through the rank of Master Sergeant, make me an ideal candidate for the HVAC technician you have posted on your company job board.

I am fully certified to work on residential, commercial, and industrial heating and cooling systems. My experience makes me well-equipped for installing, troubleshooting, and repairing all types of systems.

My years in the military have also helped me hone my interpersonal skills, thus I not only know my way around schematic drawings, compressors, and air handlers, but I also have a strong customer service focus. I know how to make customers feel confident in my abilities -- and the services I provide.

I am sure my services would be useful to you, and I will call you in the next week to discuss an interview where we can review my qualifications in greater depth.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jorge Nedvins

Enclosure

Sample Cover Letter to Recruiter

YOUR NAME

Carmen R. Ellison
624 S. Church Street
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054
609.555.0262 / E-Mail: TELLISON@home.com

Mr. Barton Keene
Able Employment Recruitment
3400 Einstein Parkway
Princeton, NJ 08540

Dear Mr. Keene:

If you have a client seeking a brand strategist who can deliver bottom-line results, I'd like to make a strong case for myself. My track record in business-to-business international branding and marketing has helped enhance the reputations of such firms as Bank of America, The Nikkei Stock Market, Northern Telecom, and Intel, to name a few. I am contacting you as I believe it is time for a change. My employer is in the process of merging with another company, so the time seems right to move on.

Of particular interest to your client firms:

- I have demonstrated my strategic ability through successfully launching companies, communications departments, Web sites, PR programs, ad campaigns, branding programs, and more.
- I have consistently contributed my leadership skills in a corporate setting, while managing the creative process, motivating and empowering team members, fine-tuning marketing plans, and juggling multiple projects. I am a proficient top manager and profit-minded leader.
- Time and again, my initiatives have resulted in increased awareness and press coverage, successful advertising campaigns, and winning branding strategies.

I am particularly interested in positions in the San Francisco Bay area that start at a salary range of \$80K to \$100K, in the following categories: marketing partner at a venture capital firm, entailing leveraging marketing opportunities for the portfolio companies and advising them on branding and marketing strategies; brand strategist and global head of marketing for a service-oriented preferably global business; senior-management role in a mid-sized integrated agency specializing in advertising, PR, and interactive services; marketing and communications head for a high-end financial services boutique; high-end headhunter or right-hand in a large philanthropic organization.

I'd like to meet with you to discuss adding value to one of your client firms as I've done for my previous employers. I'll contact you soon to arrange a meeting. Should you wish to contact me before then, I can be reached during the day on my direct line (609.555.6325) or at home most evenings (609.555.0262).

Sincerely,

Carmen R. Ellison

Enclosure

Sample Minister Resume Cover Letter

YOUR NAME
123 Park Avenue
Boston, MA 00000
(000) 000-7890
E-mail

September 23rd 2009

Ms. Sally Cook
Zeus Co.
244, East Street
San Francisco, CA 000000

Dear Ms. Cook:

I was surprised to hear of your imminent retirement. I certainly hope that you and your family do not have any health problems....

Your church is one my family has always enjoyed attending when we are traveling. Your parishioners are a friendly and caring group. I would welcome the opportunity to visit your church next month and offer a sermon to your parishioners so that they may consider me as their next pastor. (However, I know no one will ever be able to really take your place.)

Please give me a call at your earliest convenience if you feel that I would minister well to your parishioners.

Sincerely,

Martha Klingman

Enclosure: Résumé

Sample Cover Letter for Artist

YOUR NAME

6665 Pine Circle, Olympia, WA 98506 ■ Phone: 360-555-5588 ■ E-mail: stalent@esc.edu

May 1, 2008

Betty Caldwell
Olympia Arts Council
998 Pineapple Ave NE
Olympia, WA 00000

Dear Ms. Caldwell:

I was so excited when I read in *The Olympian* that you plan to install murals in all the public areas of the Eastwood Mall and plan to hire a full-time muralist for the project's duration. What a wonderful idea! I am graduating from Evergreen State College in six weeks and would like to be considered for the muralist position.

I will graduate with a management degree and an art minor. I have painted several murals in private homes, as well as assisting in a mural project for the Pine Glen Retirement Home. I can offer you the advantage not only of a talented artist, but a well-trained and disciplined one. My work recently was chosen Best in Show in my university's juried student art exhibition.

My professors have praised my ability to originate new ideas and communicate them graphically. In mural painting, the ability to interpret rough sketches and verbal instructions to produce creative art works is paramount, and those who've commissioned my murals have cited that ability in me. I possess the ability to visualize and evaluate finished products, weigh aesthetic alternatives, and make tasteful choices. My painting classes have provided me with a firm grasp of the painting processes, budget limitations, and best tools, materials, and techniques for mural painting.

I am confident that my designs will align with community tastes. I have some ideas for creating murals that capture events in local history, depicting little known details and the flavor of local lore.

Please allow me the opportunity to show you my portfolio of photos of my mural projects, as well as of my many student art projects. I will contact the Arts Council office next week to arrange a time to meet. Thank you for taking the time to consider me for this position.

Sincerely,

Seth Talented

Enclosure



Register

1. Go to The Career Center Web site at www.csuniv.edu/careers and find the big CSU logo box
2. Click **Students/Alumni**, then Register Now
3. Complete the registration with your personal e-mail or BucMail address
4. **Verify your e-mail address** — your verified registration will be approved within 2 business days by The Career Center staff

Upload your résumé

1. Open the **Professional Portfolio Documents** tab
2. “Add New,” name your document, browse to upload from your computer or flash drive, and then click “Submit”
3. A professional Career Counselor will either approve it for use in its original form, or send you recommendations for improvement.

***Note:** Be sure to open the **Microsoft Word** version of the document to modify and save your document. A **PDF** is also automatically generated that is not editable, but useful when sending via e-mail and using certain online application processes.*

ONLINE APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Online applications have become standard in the recruitment process; many companies have created unique databases on their Web sites for applicants to apply directly for internship and job vacancies. Unfortunately for the job seeker, every form is a little bit different; so it can be a bit time consuming to submit your résumé online.

The Career Center recommends you design your unique résumé and copy sections into the appropriate boxes of the application. Some applications will allow applicants to upload résumés in their entirety, we recommend using a PDF file, which is automatically generated upon approval on the BucCareer Network.

Maximize the number of hits your résumé receives on the internet

- Use jargon, acronyms, and buzzwords specific to your industry.
- Increase your list of keywords by including specifics. For example, list the names of software you use such as “Microsoft Suite and Lotus 1-2-3” rather than “computer skills.”
- Describe your experience with concrete words rather than vague descriptions. For example, it is better to write, “Managed a team of software engineers” rather than “responsible for managing and training.”
- The one page rule does not apply to online résumés; use more than one page if necessary. The computer can easily handle multiple pages, and it uses all of the information it extracts from your résumé to determine if your skills match available positions. It allows you to provide more information than you would for a human reader.
- If you have extra space, describe your interpersonal traits and attitude. Key words could include: skilled in time management, dependable, high energy, positive attitude, goal-oriented leader, and responsible.