

# Cover Letter Workbook

C | A | R | E | E | R | S E R V I C E S





## **Table of Contents**

How to Use this Workbook	<b>1</b>
Importance of Cover Letters	<b>2</b>
Cover Letter Essentials	<b>3-4</b>
Executive Brief Components	<b>5-11</b>
Your identifying information—page 5	
Date—page 5	
The recipient's identifying information—page 5	
Opening salutation—page 6	
Opening paragraph—page 6-7	
Main body—page 7-9	
The close—page 10	
Closing salutation—11	
Example Paper Executive Brief and Email Version	<b>12-13</b>
More Examples Executive Brief Cover Letter template	<b>15-20</b>
Executive Brief Cover Letter template	<b>21-22</b>

# How to Use this Workbook

This workbook is designed to introduce you to the major components of an Executive Brief Cover letter and walk you through the process of developing this effective style of cover letters.

When you complete the instructions in this workbook, you will have a good first draft of a cover letter for a specific job opportunity. After the draft is completed, Career Services invites you to make an appointment. Career Services expects you to have questions, and strongly encourages you to have someone critique a few of your cover letters before you send them to prospective employers.

In addition, Career Services invites you to make an appointment to discuss your overall job search strategy.

You can make an appointment at the following locations:

## **Career Services**

Room 1740  
Des Plaines Campus  
1600 East Golf Road  
Des Plaines, Illinois 60016  
847.635.1735

## **Enrollment Center**

Room A100  
Skokie Campus  
7701 North Lincoln Avenue  
Skokie, Illinois 60077  
847.635.1400

## Importance of Cover Letters

**Most people know they need a resume for their job search. However, you might be wondering do I really need a cover letter? The answer is unequivocal. Yes you do!**

Every resume you send out should be accompanied by a cover letter. Most job listings will not specifically ask for one, but a cover letter is always expected. You might be thinking this is very old school; in this day and age effective job search strategies involve online job boards, social networking sites, and emails. While it is true, today's successful job search does require incorporation of these new strategies, a well written cover letter still makes you stand out among the candidates.

Some employers see red flags when there is no cover letter along with a resume. The absence of a cover letter can suggest that your heart really isn't into getting the job or you are sending resumes in mass, rather than targeting their specific company. Unfortunately, even terrific candidates with great credentials and experiences are not asked to interview because they have submitted such poorly written letters (even when the "letter" is an email) the hiring agent cannot imagine that their job performance will be up to the company's standards. Basically, if you really want the job an excellent cover letter is vital.

Think of your cover letter as a personal conversation with the hiring agent. The cover letter focuses on the employer, in contrast to the resume that focuses on you. The cover letter should clearly articulate why you are the ideal person for the job.

Some employers place more importance on the cover letter than the resume. One reason for this is you can hire someone to write your resume for you, but it is unlikely you hired someone to write your cover letters. Therefore, the cover letter is a true reflection of your efforts. It is also true that some employers focus on the resume and not the cover letter. **The risk in not** submitting a cover letter is you never know to which type of employer you are applying.

The key to an effective cover letter is focusing on what the employer – the buyer – wants. **Good sales people know people will pay for what benefits them.** A simple list of features alone is not enough to get people to buy. This means you must scrutinize the job listing or job description and understand what the employer is seeking. These documents tell you, explicitly, what the company's needs are. Typically, the job responsibilities and qualifications listed in the job listing or job description are the criteria the hiring agent will use to evaluate whether you are suited for the job. Use your cover letter to explain precisely how you fit the criteria.

# Cover Letter ESSENTIALS

1. An insufficiently written or generic form-like cover letter will hurt your job search. The cover letter is the first thing the employer sees. Failing to put any effort into the cover letter will suggest that you don't put much effort into your work.
2. Don't lose the reader with your first sentence. Do you really believe starting out with "I'm applying for the job I saw in the Sunday Chicago Tribune online classifieds" in going to tempt the reader to read further?
8. Don't include unsubstantiated bragging. Remember in the interview you are likely to be asked about anything you put in your cover letter and resume. Provide specific achievements to demonstrate your skills and talents.

*Typically a cover letter and resume only get a 20 second glance, so your first line either grabs the reader's attention or loses it.*

3. State what position you are seeking. An employer will **NOT** take the time to decode your cover letter and resume to determine where you might fit into the organization. He or she will just toss it into the "no interview" pile.
4. Include something about the employer. Doing a little research before you apply will help you get insights about the needs of the employer and it lets the employer know that you are really interested in working for **THEM**.
5. If you are in a technical field, while giving a complete picture of your technical skills, take out as much of the jargon as possible. Your cover letter and resume are likely to be reviewed by non-techies.
6. Use the same keywords that you used in your resume. However, don't simply repeat statements from your resume. You need to put a different spin on your skills for the cover letter.
7. Make sure to leave out any mention of the reasons for leaving a particular job.

## FORMATTING GUIDELINES

1. A cover letter should never be more than one page.
2. Keep your average sentence from ten to twenty words. Shorten any sentence with more than twenty words or break it into two sentences.
3. Describe yourself in the first person (I). Your cover letter has a different writing style than your resume.
4. Keep every paragraph short, ideally under three lines.
5. Make sure your sentences begin with or contain powerful action verbs and phrases.
6. Use a reasonable font size; don't go below 12. You are weakening your chances at a positive response if the hiring agent cannot read it without reading glasses. Remember text is often blurred when it is faxed. Small and blurry is unreadable. And, you don't want the reader to need to use the horizontal scroll bar in electronic communication. If you need to shrink the font size to get everything on one page you are trying to put too much in your cover letter. **Edit Wisely!**

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PROOFREADING

1. Most hiring agents will stop reading when they see typos and/or spelling mistakes. If the reader finds errors in grammar or punctuation, you could be jeopardizing your chance for an interview. Why would an employer want to interview someone who can't even correct the errors in a cover letter? Don't rely on spell-checkers. Proofread very carefully since spell-checkers correct misspellings but they don't correct wrong word usages such as using "right" when you meant "write."
2. THEN HAVE SOMEONE ELSE PROOFREAD YOUR COVER LETTERS! It is extremely difficult to completely proofread your own writing. It is common for people to correct errors in their "mind's eye" when proofreading their own work. Unfortunately correcting in your mind's eye doesn't correct the errors in the document.

There are a number of different types of cover letters. We find the Executive Brief gets the best results. In other words, people who use the Executive Brief style of cover letter tend to get the most interviews!!!!

An Executive Brief takes more effort than other types of cover letters but it is well worth it.

The following pages will describe the components of an **Executive Brief**.

## Executive Brief Components

### Your identifying information

You would be surprised by the number of people who don't provide their identifying information on their cover letter. Don't assume that your cover letter will remain with your resume. If the hiring agent doesn't know who wrote the letter it will not help you get an interview.

You should include:

- Your name
- Address
- Home or cell phone (it is best not to list work phone number). If you provide your cell phone make certain to screen your calls. It is important not to be caught at an inopportune time.
- Email address (an email you will actually read.)

Tip—copy and paste your identifying information from your resume. Using the same formatting on both documents makes for a very polished look.

### Date

People want to know when a letter was sent, so don't forget to include TODAY'S DATE. The date is placed on the left margin, then enter two blank lines.

If your cover letter is an email, you do not need to include the date. The date is automatically part of the email.

### The recipient's identifying information

Any business letter needs to include the recipient's name (check the spelling), his or her title, the company name and address, including city, state and zip.

Put the **recipient's** identifying information after the date. The recipient's information is placed on the left margin. Then enter two blank lines.

If your cover letter is an email, reference the specific position and the recipient's name in the Subject line.

If your supervisor greeted you each morning by saying, "Hello, employee," you wouldn't like it. You would think he or she couldn't be bothered to learn your name. Cover letters beginning "Dear Sir or Madam" and "To Whom It May Concern" are the same type of greeting.



If the job posting does not specify who will receive your application, find out!

There are many ways to find out who the letter should be addressed to.

- If you are responding to a job listing send the letter to the person listed in the ad.
- Call up the company and ask for the name (it can be that simple).
- Review the company's Website.
- Ask the people in your network if they know anyone at the company whom you could ask.

### Opening Salutation

All letters need an OPENING SALUTATION, which is the introductory greeting. Use Dear Mr. Smith, Dear Ms. Smith, Dear Dr. Smith. Follow with a colon (:). A colon is more formal than a comma.

Make sure you know the person's gender. Getting the gender correct is important, addressing a letter Mr. Smith when it is really Ms. Smith does not make you look good.

If you cannot learn the name of the hiring agent, consider writing something a little different, like *Good Morning*. Or, as a last resort it is acceptable to follow the time honored rule of "when in doubt, leave it out." In other words, leave out the salutation entirely if you don't know who you are sending the letter to. **Don't use a generic greeting**, like *Dear Employer*.

Remember without the recipient's name you have decreased your chances for an interview. It is really worth your time to do a little digging for a name.

### Opening paragraph, first sentence

The opening paragraph is where you state the PURPOSE OF YOUR LETTER. If the reader cannot determine the purpose of your letter quickly, they probably will not continue reading it.

A strong opening sentence is critical; hit them with your best shot! "I'm applying for the position I saw on the Chicago Tribune online classifieds on July 7" is **NOT** a strong opening. However, do add where you saw the job listing and any identifying information such as job number in the second sentence.

The first sentence advises the reader of the purpose of your letter. **It should be something that grabs the reader and makes them want to read on.**

Examples:

- Ten years of experience in collections, credit, and accounting, with more than six years at a managerial level in credit, plus proven expertise in collecting funds while building and maintaining positive relationships with customers and staff, are just part of what I would furnish in your position of Credit and Collections Manager.
- Six years in technical support within the food industry with proven marketing and product development skills is the background I would supply Food Unlimited as your Sales Representative.
- With five years as a successful Clinical Lab Manager, I would bring proven techniques to increase profit, enhance productivity and reduce costs to Labs, Inc.
- Experience in fundraising, gift solicitation, event planning with success in marketing, media relations and strategic planning is the background I would bring to your Senior Foundation Assistant position.

## Executive Brief Components continued

### Opening paragraph, first sentence continued

Or

If the intended reader suggested you contact them, or if you have recently spoken with the person, or if someone suggested you submit your resume to the reader, say it in the first sentence. Follow with the sentence that grabs.

Examples:

- We met at the Conference on Aging in Chicago in January. At that time you suggested I follow up at the beginning of May.
- At the urging of Karen Smith at Brooks Publishing, I am submitting my application for consideration for your Junior Textbook Editor position.
- Having received your name from Janet Peabody, I am writing to you to discuss how the talents I developed during my 15 years in pharmaceutical sales could be utilized at Majestic Pills.

### Main body

To this point, all the components for an Executive Brief Cover Letter are no different than any type of cover letter. The **main body** is what makes an executive brief so special and so effective.

To create an Executive Brief main body you will need either the job description or position advertisement.

What you are going to do is deconstruct the job description or advertisement to understand the desired requirements and qualifications and spell out for the reader how you meet them.

By telling the reader how you meet their needs, you are making it very easy for the person reviewing the applications to put you in “yes, interview” pile. The less effort the hiring agent needs to put in to considering your candidacy the more likely you are to get an interview.

If you are thinking this is going to be a lot of work, you are correct. The first couple of executive brief cover letters you write will probably take you some time to create. However, as with any new skill once you are practiced at them, executive brief cover letters will take less and less time to write.

**The following job ad will be used for Jane O'Malley's cover letter. (See page 12.)**

XYZ University is looking for an exceptional Curriculum Designer to join our growing organization. This position will allow candidates to work remotely from any US location.

The Curriculum Designer is expected to project manage the development and plan production elements of their assigned courses. May build the courses in the platform (eCollege) using the XYZ University authoring tool and create interactive components for the courses.

**Key Job Responsibilities:**

Oversees the development of assigned on-line courses and ensures that all courses are developed on schedule. Ensures the course is compliant with XYZ University standards and meets all quality assurance checks. Works with subject matter experts, course leads, faculty and chairs as they assist in building a new course or revising an existing course. Builds courses using the XYZ University authoring tool and in eCollege (as needed). Creates interactive components for courses (as needed). Requests needed course support materials from publishers and others. Stays current with development processes and new trends. Corrects curriculum issues for courses as reported on the Course Issues site (as needed). Acts as an area expert in interactive components.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

**Master's Degree (M.A./M.S.) Instructional Design**, Curriculum, Educational Media, Graphic Design. **Two to four years experience** and/or training. **Knowledge of HTML, web-page development and web-authoring tools**, Lectora preferred, Illustrator, Captivate, Flash Knowledge of HTML, MS Office, web-page development and web-authoring tools. Strong communication skills and computer skills. **Project management and time management skills, works well both individually and as a member of a team.** **Adaptable and flexible, attention to detail, dependable, shows initiative, organized and knows how to plan, creative and able to put content into engaging activities.** **Can prioritize and problem solve, online experience,** eCollege experience, Lectora experience.

**Preferred Qualifications:** Online experience is a plus. Job Number 12345BR

Your task is to pick out the most important requirements and qualifications. Typically, you will not include everything the employer is looking for. This process will be a lot easier if you do it in a couple of steps. Your first draft will focus on the main or most important needs, but will probably still list too much. For example, this employer will accept a Masters degree in a number of areas: all the degrees they will accept is listed in the first draft. The second draft is the distilled list. In the second draft only the degree the job seeker possesses is listed. Remember you must get the company's needs down to their essence (in other words short and to the point).

For the above job ad the following was a **first draft** of the employer needs. The items on this list were determined by one specific job seeker to be the most important. What you might determine to be the most important might be different. Typically, people focus on the requirements that relate most to their skills and experiences. However, **be careful not to ignore key requirements.**

**First Draft**

- M.A./M.S. Instructional Design, Curriculum, Educational Media, Graphic Design
- Two to four years experience
- Knowledge of HTML, web-page development and web-authoring tools, Lectora preferred, Illustrator, Captivate, and Flash
- Project management and time management skills, works well both individually and as a member of a team
- Adaptable and flexible, attention to detail, dependable, shows initiative, organized and knows how to plan
- Creative and able to put content into engaging activities
- Can prioritize and problem solve
- Online experience

**Main body  
continued**

In a new paragraph, explain *what you are going to do*.

For example:

While my attached resume will provide you with a general outline of my history, my problem-solving abilities and some achievements, I have taken the liberty to list your current specific requirements and my applicable skills in those areas.

Then insert a table, with no table border.

On the left you will list the company's needs. Edit the company's needs to their essence. **It is okay to combine items when it makes sense to do so.**

On the right show how you meet those needs. Be careful not to simply restate the company's needs with the preface "I have." Explain why you believe you meet their needs. In other words, when illustrating your skills think specific and big picture—don't repeat verbatim. Notice: this person does not have experience with Lectora but does have experience with a product competitor WebCT, so they listed that.

## Second Draft of Employer Needs

### Your Needs

- M.A./M.S. in Instructional Design.
- Two to four years experience; online experience.
- Knowledge of web-page development and web-authoring tools.
- Project management and time management skills, works well both individually and as a member of a team.
- Adaptable and flexible, attention to detail, dependable, shows initiative, organized and knows how to plan.
- Creative and able to put content into engaging activities.
- Can prioritize and problem solve.

### My Skills and Experience

- M.S. in Adult and Corporate Instructional Management.
- Proven track record of 10 years teaching in the classroom and online, as well as curriculum development at the college level.
- Adept with HTML; Dreamweaver; Adobe Illustrator, Flash and Photoshop; and WebCT. Familiar with Adobe Captivate.
- Sought out by colleagues for committees; partnered with a World Wide Web instructor to develop a new online course utilizing WebCT: *Building a Web Page for Your Small Business*.
- Successful history of working concurrently at three colleges as an adjunct instructor.
- Skilled at making the complex simple; receive accolades for innovative course activities; and student evaluations are consistently excellent.
- Talented problem solver, resourceful in investigating issues, generating possible options, and selecting and implementing workable solutions before the deadline.

### The Close

The closing paragraph is your last opportunity to spell out how your experiences, skills and talents match what the employer is looking for.

**Don't forget to ask for an interview.** It is a simple thing that can make a difference.

And, if follow up is in any way possible, include how YOU are going to follow up. Don't be passive and expect the hiring agent to contact you. It is best when you give a specific time frame (the end of next week, the first week in March, etc.)

If you are engaged in a job search voice mail is essential. Make sure that your voice mailbox is not full and you have recorded an appropriate greeting. Do **NOT** suggest good times to call.

Examples:

- My experience matches the needs you identify on your posting. I am requesting an interview. I will give you a call next week to set up a time for us to talk further.
- My accomplishments with XYZ Company are in line with your IT needs at ABC Company. I will call you the week of April 28 to discuss setting up an interview.
- I am confident that my 10 years of management experience matches the criteria by which DEF Company evaluates potential additions to its management team. Please expect my call on Tuesday, July 9 to arrange for an interview.
- If you are looking for an effective sales consultant who will make an immediate positive impact on accounts I would like to meet. I will telephone you on Friday. I look forward to speaking with you.
- I am especially interested in the marketing research position you describe. I believe my combination of business experience and social science research training will allow me to make a difference at ABC Company. I will contact you early next week to explore the possibility of a meeting to discuss the position further.
- I look forward to the chance to demonstrate how my talents match the requirements of this position and your company. I will call you next week to answer any questions you might have about my background and hope we can arrange a meeting to discuss how I can meet your needs.
- I would welcome the opportunity to discuss ways my success at expanding sales organizations into new areas might be a fit as you develop new territory. I am requesting an interview; I can assure you it will be time well spent. I will contact you late next week to arrange for a time.
- I am eager to put my combination of human resource and training background to work in the forward thinking environment that exists at ABC Company. I will contact you soon in hopes of scheduling a meeting time.
- I am interested in your internship opportunity because you offer practical experience in analyzing investments and contributing to the management of a portfolio. I will follow up next week in hopes we can meet in the near future.

## Closing Salutation

Deciding on the right closing salutation for a business letter or professional email can be tricky. You need to find a balance between overly used salutations and the formality of the correspondence.

Some examples:

- Sincerely,
- Best regards,
- Confidently yours,
- Thank you,
- Yours respectfully,

*The above are standard, but how about?*

- Enthusiastic about joining your team,
- Thankfully yours,
- With appreciation,
- With anticipation,

In a paper letter you leave 4 lines blank and type your name. Sign between the closing salutation and your typed name.

In an email, type your name on the line following the salutation.

The Executive Brief Cover Letter on page 12 is an example of a paper cover letter which includes all the elements discussed here. There are also a number of examples starting on page 15.

### Formatting letter for email

The example on page 13 is the same cover letter formatted for email. Many email systems do not handle tables very well, therefore, don't risk using them. Make use of **bold**.

Most email systems limit the number of characters and spaces per line, which may cause line wraps in odd and even illogical places. There is an easy fix for this: limit each line to no more than 65 characters and spaces.

### Limit line lengths

1. Create your email cover letter in Word.
2. Select the entire document and change the font to Courier, 12 pt.
3. Click on Page Setup (under file) set the left margin at 1.00 and the right margin at 1.75.

### Preserve line lengths by saving as Plain Text with Line Breaks.

4. Click on File; select **Save As**, and select Plain Text.
5. Save this document under a new file name, such as "CoverwithTextBreaks."
6. When you click on Save a File Conversion window will appear; put a check mark in the box next to **Insert line breaks**.
7. Next to End lines with: select **CR/LF**
8. Click OK.
9. Close the document
10. Reopen your plain text cover letter with text breaks.
11. Now you can select the entire document and change the font to Times, Arial, or another standard font you like.
12. With the left and right margins set and saved under these conditions, each line of your document will be no more than 65 characters and spaces

Don't worry that the margins automatically reset when you reopen your Plain Text with Line Breaks document. Your line lengths are safely preserved by paragraph returns that were inserted by the conversion.

## Paper Cover Letter

Jane O'Malley

1234 Main Street ♦ Anywhere ♦ Illinois ♦ 60016  
847.555.3541 ♦ jomalley@gmail.com

July 28, 2014

Robin Schwartz, Associate Vice President for Human Resources  
XYZ University  
5678 State Street  
Best City, Illinois 60568

Dear Mr. Schwartz:

Thriving on innovation; a history of enthusiastically incorporating new technology into existing college programs; whose program development extends to successfully creating curriculum for classroom and online college credit courses is what I would bring to your Curriculum Designer position posted on goodjobs.com (job 12345BR).

While my attached resume will provide you with a general outline of my history, my problem-solving abilities and some achievements, I have taken the liberty to list your current specific requirements and my applicable skills in those areas.

Your Needs

- M.S. in Instructional Design.
- Two to four years experience; online experience.
- Knowledge of web-page development and web-authoring tools.
- Project management and time management skills, works well both individually and as a member of a team.
- Adaptable and flexible, attention to detail, dependable, shows initiative, organized and knows how to plan.
- Creative and able to put content into engaging activities.
- Can prioritize and problem solve.

My Skills and Experience

- M.S. in Adult and Corporate Instructional Management.
- Proven track record of 10 years teaching in the classroom and online, as well as curriculum development at the college level.
- Adept with HTML; Dreamweaver; Adobe Illustrator, Flash and Photoshop; and WebCT. Familiar with Adobe Captivate.
- Sought out by colleagues for committees; partnered with a World Wide Web instructor to develop a new online course utilizing WebCT: *Building a Web Page for Your Small Business*.
- Successful history of working concurrently at three colleges as an adjunct instructor.
- Skilled at making the complex simple; receive accolades for innovative course activities; and student evaluations are consistently excellent.
- Talented problem solver, resourceful in investigating issues, generating possible options, and selecting and implementing workable solutions before the deadline.

I am especially interested in this position because XYZ University has established itself as a leader in distance education. Winning the United States Distance Learning Association's 2014 International Distance Learning Award was a wonderful recognition of your innovations in online learning.

My accomplishments with online learning in college environments are in line with your needs. I will call you the week of August 2 in hopes of scheduling an interview.

Enthusiastic about joining your team,

Jane O'Malley

## Email Cover Letter

In the subject line Curriculum Designer (job 12345BR), Robin Schwartz

Jane O'Malley  
1234 Main Street  
Anywhere, Illinois 60016  
847.555.3541  
jomalley@gmail.com

Robin Schwartz, Associate Vice President for Human Resources  
XYZ University  
5678 State Street  
Best City, Illinois 60568

Dear Mr. Schwartz:

Thriving on innovation; a history of enthusiastically incorporating new technology into existing college programs; whose program development extends to successfully creating curriculum for classroom and online college credit courses is what I would bring to your Curriculum Designer position posted on goodjobs.com (job 12345BR).

While my attached resume will provide you with a general outline of my history, my problem-solving abilities and some achievements, I have taken the liberty to list your current specific requirements and my applicable skills in those areas.

M.S. in Adult and Corporate Instructional Management: **M.S. in Adult and Corporate Instructional Management.**

Two to four years experience; online experience: **proven track record of 10 years teaching in the classroom and online, as well as curriculum development at the college level.**

Knowledge of web-page development and web-authoring tools: **adept with HTML; Dreamweaver; Adobe Illustrator, Flash and Photoshop; and WebCT. Familiar with Adobe Captivate.**

Project management and time management skills, works well both individually and as a member of a team: **sought out by colleagues for committees; partnered with a World Wide Web instructor to develop a new online course utilizing WebCT: *Building a Web Page for Your Small Business.***

Adaptable and flexible, attention to detail, dependable, shows initiative, organized and knows how to plan: **successful history of working concurrently at three colleges as an adjunct instructor.**

Creative and able to put content into engaging activities: **skilled at making the complex simple; receive accolades for innovative course activities; and student evaluations are consistently excellent.**

Can prioritize and problem solve: **talented problem solver, resourceful in investigating issues, generating possible options, and selecting and implementing workable solutions before the deadline.**

I am especially interested in this position because XYZ University has established itself as a leader in distance education. Winning the United States Distance Learning Association's 2014 International Distance Learning Award was a wonderful recognition of your innovations in online learning.

My accomplishments with online learning in college environments are in line with your needs. I will call you the week of August 2 in hopes of scheduling a meeting time.

Enthusiastic about joining your team,  
Jane O'Malley





**CAUTION**

**DO NOT** simply copy the examples in this workbook  
and use them as your own.

Many people use Oakton's Career Services workbooks. If you  
submit the same letter as everyone else it will **NOT** work for you.

Write your own unique cover letter.

**On pages 21-22 is an  
Executive Brief Cover  
Letter template.**

**Use it to create  
your own letters.**

## The Posting

The job advertisement listed below was used to create Susan Smith's cover letter.

### Payroll Coordinator-FIN123-456

This position is responsible for maintaining and **processing a bi-weekly payroll**, including time entry, commissions, updates and adjustments for all associates in assigned markets. This position interfaces with market and corporate associates in regard to payroll questions and associate records and has a close working relationship with the corporate office.

- **Work with associates** from assigned markets or Corporate **on any questions or issues pertaining to payroll**. Answer questions and **resolve issues as they occur**.
- Enter associate time corrections, commissions, bonuses, adjustments and special payments for assigned markets.
- Enter all associate new hire and change personnel information received from Human Resources.  
Review all input for accuracy.
- **Complete Payroll Cycle Audit procedure** after payroll records are processed by **SAP**.
- Maintain accuracy of job file, time reviewer files, cost centers and other payroll related data files.
- Monitor and maintain direct deposit recalls/errors.
- Process manual checks as necessary, maintaining records in appropriate files.
- Complete employment verifications.
- Assist in year-end processing and W-2 validation.
- Other tasks as assigned by supervisor/manager.
- Two or more years payroll experience working on a **large computerized payroll system** required.
- High school diploma or equivalent required; Associates degree preferred.
- Experience with **financial related PC applications** required.

# Susan Smith

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123 Anywhere Street Des Plaines, IL 60016 (847) 123-4567 suesmith@gmail.com

June 24, 2014

Janet Brown, Human Resources  
ABC Cellular  
P.O. Box 0203  
Palatine, IL 60055-0203

Dear Ms. Brown:

As an accomplished finance professional with over five years' experience in payroll production, I am pleased to apply to the Payroll Coordinator (job # FIN0123-456) position with ABC Cellular as posted on joblistings.com. My unique blend of payroll, bookkeeping, and banking skills from both the private and public sector closely match those of your ideal candidate:

*You want an employee who . . .*

processes bi-weekly payroll using a large payroll system.

can resolve any payroll issue.

will complete Payroll Cycle Audits.

has experience with finance computer applications.

*I am the candidate who . . .*

can integrate wage types, state and federal tax forms, time management, and incentive wages with existing accounting procedures.

consistently is the lead resource and educator for personnel.

assists with weekly audits and is trained in SAP procedures.

is very comfortable with Excel, QuickBooks Payroll, and People Trak.

ABC Cellular has a dynamic history of award winning human resource strategies and innovative business practices. I would like to request an interview to explore how my finance background could enhance the already considerable expertise of your organization. I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Sue Smith

## Job Description

The job description listed below was used to create Rebecca Bender's cover letter.

**Job Description:** Junior Events Planner, Nearthown, IL  
**Department:** US Private Banking Marketing  
**Position Title:** Junior Event Planner, Midwest Region  
**Location:** Nearthown, IL

### Overview:

Junior planner will assist in all aspects of client event activities with a focus on the Midwest region of Proud Bank's Private Banking division. Planner will work with a variety of types of events, ranging from 300 person multi-day conferences to small dinners, with supporting participation in global events, sponsorships, and ticket opportunities. **The planner will work on multiple event projects at one time** The planner's goals are to help the Midwest Region of Private Banking **drive prospecting, deepen existing client relationships** create and drive efficiencies for all internal partners while maintaining Proud Bank's brand standards in all events.

**The position demands much interaction with colleagues on the global events team** and the larger Private Banking marketing team, especially for data management and tracking. There is also interaction with all levels of client-facing bankers and product partners; and limited interaction with the senior management of the division as well as of the firm.

Event Planning responsibilities include:

- Understand target audiences and assist teams to develop an event strategy that supports business goals
- **Collaborate with event manager and global marketing teams on overall Wealth Management event data and analysis.**
- Primarily responsible for the design and execution of approximately 30 events per year, including both content-driven events and social events, plus supporting participation in global and sponsorship events as described above.
- **Maintain budgets, event calendar and event attendee tracking information as needed. Prior experience with list management is required.**
- Liaise with other Proud Bank lines of business in order to leverage and consolidate ideas, shared resources and cross sell event opportunities
- Participate in weekly regional team US regional events team meetings and take away best practices to share with the regional business groups
- Function as an integral part of the team; willing to step in and assist where needed
- Willing to present event concepts and innovations proactively to senior management as appropriate, and if approved, confidently move into the event design and execution stage with light supervision.
- Administrative responsibilities (invoice processing; invitation creation; pre-event tasks - nametags, place cards, menu cards, seating, etc.)

### Qualifications

#### Skills required:

- **2-4 years prior experience in event management, including vendor contract negotiations and processes, is required. Applicants without this experience will not be considered.**
- **Experience in financial services a plus.**
- Must be detail-oriented and able to multi-task and work under tight deadlines
- **Prior experience in data and budget management**
- Excellent oral and written communications skills
- Discretion around private client information a must
- Ability to work late hours and travel (30%)
- **Strong proficiency in Excel, Word & Power Point**
- **BA degree**

**REBECCA BENDER**

888 Mill Road, Des Plaines, IL 60016  
847-333-3333, rben@aol.com

June 29, 2014

Susan Paro, Midwest Events Manager  
Proud Bank  
6464 First Street  
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Ms. Paro:

With over two years experience planning meetings for a variety of industries including finance, I am very interested in your Junior Events Planner position posted recently on your website. Highlights of my qualifications include:

You need someone who:

Has experience in event management and vendor contract negotiations.

Understands marketing and events data and analysis.

Deepens existing client relationships while driving prospecting.

Has excellent computer proficiency.

My accomplishments include:

Successfully juggled all details of planning five major trade shows annually including negotiating service provider contracts within budget.

Developed marketing strategies and materials appropriate to each; created system for documenting attendee demographics and managing lists allowing targeted follow-up; it was quickly adopted for use by clients.

Effectively supported vendors, presenters and attendees to maximize event results.

Adept with Excel, Word and Power Point; additional software knowledge includes ACT, IMISS, FileMaker and Expocad.

I am especially interested in this position because of the opportunity to collaborate with global marketing teams. I worked extensively with international attendees and vendors and loved the challenges in making their experience a positive one. I will call you early next week to explore the possibility of an interview.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Bender

## Job Posting

The job advertisement listed below was used to create Lee Jones' cover letter.

### Clinical Coordinator

**Department:** Emergency Department

**Schedule:** Full-time

**Shift:** 1<sup>st</sup> Shift (DAYS)

**Job Details:**

Associates degree required

Licensure required

5+ years experience is required

Responsible for the **coordination of delivery of patient care and monitoring plan of care**. Responsible for specific personnel management functions for an assigned unit as delegated by manager. Works under general supervision.

Position carries direct responsibility for other members of the healthcare team. This individual has expressed authority to carry out the duties as defined in the job description. Day-to-day responsibilities require good use of judgment regarding timely and appropriate communication to team members and families. Requires ability to manage workload independently, prioritize demands and problem-solve effectively. Recognizes **the need for teamwork and functions as part of a multi-disciplinary team**. Must model SHARE principles.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** **Graduation from an accredited school of nursing.** Current Illinois RN licensure. **CPR certification required. Minimum of 4 full-time equivalent years in an acute care setting,** (inclusive of 1 year in ER). **1 year's leadership experience required.** Knowledge base consistent with specialty practice, certification desirable. Key skills include: effective communication, assessment, effective follow-through, decision making, independent judgment. **Ability to relate as a team member. Experience with patient and/or staff education.** An ability to communicate in English, both verbally and in writing. Ability to use various instruments, machines, tools, equipment and work aids as necessary to perform job duties.

**LEE JONES**

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125 Maple Street, Des Plaines, IL 70000, 847.555.1212, leejones22@gmail.com

July 8, 2014

Caring Hospital  
678 Elm Street  
Niles, IL 60000

Dear Dr. Green:

With over 5 years acute care registered nursing experience and a background coordinating a successful healthcare program, I am confident in the abilities I can bring to the *Clinical Coordinator* position advertised on joblistings.com. I am familiar with working in an emergency room environment and enjoy working as part of a multi-disciplinary team. Additionally, I have experience coordinating patient care and monitoring out-patient plan of care.

YOU WANT:

Associates Degree  
Licensure required  
4 years acute care experience  
CPR certification  
1 year's leadership experience  
Patient and/or staff education experience

I HAVE:

Bachelor of Science in Nursing  
Registered Nurse Licensure, State of Illinois  
Over 5 years acute care ER experience  
CPR and First Aid certification  
2 years Healthcare Coordinator experience  
Taught staff continuing education triage courses

I am confident that my nursing experience in both acute care and as a healthcare coordinator would benefit your Emergency Department's needs. I am requesting an interview where I could demonstrate further how I would contribute to the Caring Hospital team. I will contact you early next week to arrange for an interview.

Best regards,

Lee Jones

# Executive Brief Cover Letter Template

You will notice that this template is two pages.  
It is only two pages to give you room to write.  
Remember your actual cover letter should never be longer than ONE page.

**Your Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

Present this information in the same way as on your resume for the look of letter head. Leave two blank lines after.

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Spell out the month and include the day, followed by a comma and the year. Leave two blank lines after.

**Hiring Agent's Name and Title** \_\_\_\_\_

Make every effort to locate the person's name.

**Company Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Company/Mailing Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

Leave two blank lines after recipient information.

**Salutation** Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

If the person's gender is unknown (don't assume) leave off the Ms. or Mr. Use the full name instead. Leave one blank line.

## Opening Paragraph

The first sentence advises the reader of the purpose of your letter. It should be something that grabs the reader and makes them want to read on. In the second sentence make sure to include the position for which you are applying, where you found the advertisement and any job number.

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**Main Body**

Tell the reader your intention.

Examples:

I have listed your current specific requirements and my applicable skills and experiences in those areas:

or

My experience so closely parallels your requirements that I have listed your current specific requirements and my applicable skills and experiences in those areas.

To keep formatting clean on a paper cover letter, it is best to insert a table with no table border. Lines are only drawn here to make your writing easier.

**Your Needs**

or

**You Want**

In this column you write the employer's requirements.

**My Qualifications**

or

**I Have**

In this column you write your qualification or skill that meets the requirement.


**Closing Paragraph**

The last paragraph should give the reader some information about the company. Let them know you did your research. In addition, request an ACTION. Ask directly for an interview. Close with a statement about how you are going to FOLLOW UP. It is best to give a specific time frame.

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**Closing Salutation**

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**Your signature**

**Your typed Name**

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**KEEP A COPY OF YOUR COVER LETTER TOGETHER WITH THE JOB AD AND THE RESEARCH YOU DID ABOUT THE COMPANY.**

If possible review these materials before you talk with the hiring agent regarding the interview and keep these materials handy, so you can talk intelligently.

Remember to make an appointment with a career counselor to have a few of your Executive Brief Cover Letters critiqued.

Also, make an appointment with a career counselor if you would like assistance with another type of cover letter.

You can make an appointment at the following locations:

**Career Services**

Room 1740  
Des Plaines Campus  
1600 East Golf Road  
Des Plaines, Illinois 60016  
847.635.1735

**Enrollment Center**

Room A100  
Skokie Campus  
7701 North Lincoln Avenue  
Skokie, Illinois 60077  
847.635.1400

Best of luck on your job search.