**COVER LETTERS**

***What is a cover letter?*** A cover letter, also called a *letter of interest* or *application letter,* is a letter you write in business letter format to an employer that you send along with your resume when applying for a job.

***What’s the purpose of it?*** While employers have different opinions of it and uses for it, more often than not, your cover letter will be read only after they’ve read your resume and decided they want to know more. Therefore, your cover letter should *supplement* the info on your resume. It gives the employer a chance to get a better sense of who you are. It will also be used to assess your communication skills.

**An effective letter should convince the employer of 2 things:**

1. That you are a good match with what they’re looking for and will add value to their organization

2. That you’ve done your research and really feel like this job and this organization are the right fit for you

**Tips for Writing an Effective Letter**

**TARGET each letter** to each specific job and company. NEVER send out a generic cover letter- there is no point since it won’t cover any of the above topics. Remember, this is not just a formality; **you are writing a *letter* to a *person***. Think about if you had the opportunity to be face-to-face with the hiring manager… what would you say to explain why you want the job and why they should want to hire you over someone else?

**Focus on what YOU can do for THEM**, not what they can do for you. You want to say enough about why you’re interested in the job to make them convinced that you really will fit and want to stay awhile, but your *main focus* should be on how you will benefit the company.

**Address your letter to a person**; only use “To Whom It May Concern” as a last resort. This really matters to employers! Be willing to do some research to find a name. Call and ask, talk to current employees, look for a directory on their website or other info about who is in charge of different departments, or use LinkedIn (see Job Search handout). It doesn’t have to be addressed to the first person to read it, but it should be someone logical, like the head of the department this particular position is under.

**Keep it to 1 page, between 10 and 12pt font size**. In most cases, employers won’t want to read a letter that is longer than one page. Use a standard font like Times New Roman or Arial. Adjusting margins is ok.

**It must be error-free!** Errors in your letter make the employer think you will be careless at work, and having one error can be the *only* reason they need to rule you out. Always proofread carefully, and then have another detail-oriented person check it for errors. It’s often hard to proofread your own writing!

**Drop names**. If someone the employer knows (and likes) referred you to that company or suggested you apply for that job, say so in your letter.

**Write professionally** and intelligently, but don’t overdo it! It is usually obvious if you are trying to write in a way that is much different than how you generally communicate, and your letter will be more likely to sound awkward or contain errors. DO make sure your letter is well written and well thought-out, because the employer WILL use it as a sample of your writing ability!

**COVER LETTER TEMPLATE**

*\*This page will walk you through the standard business letter format, and what to include in your letter. You don’t have to organize your paragraphs exactly as described below, but the format below is the most standard format, and is easy to follow for beginners!*

Your Street Address

Your City, State, Zip Code (You have the option to use your resume header instead of this section)

Current Date (write out the name of the month)

Employer's Name, Title

Department or Division

Company/Organization Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr./Individual's Name OR Dear Sir or Madam:

**Paragraph 1 (Introduction)**: Concisely state your purpose for writing the letter. This paragraph is usually only a couple sentences long. Here, you will specify the position you want to be considered for. You can include how you learned about the opening, but this is really the most helpful if you heard of the opening from someone the employer knows, such as a current employee or a contact of the employer. *(A note about name-dropping: This is helpful only if the employer has a positive relationship with the person whose name you drop. So be careful, especially since it is usually impossible to know for sure if the employer likes the person! Also, dropping the name of someone in a higher position than the hiring manager can be seen as threatening, and can hurt your chances.)* You can also include a brief introduction to why you’re interested in the position and/or company, or why you’re qualified for the position. Just like you would in an essay, you are introducing the ideas you will talk about in the rest of your letter.

**Paragraph 2 (Body)**: Tell the employer why you’re the best candidate for the job, and how you will contribute to the success of the organization in this role. Use the job description (or refer to the Resume handout for what to do if there is no job description) to determine what the employer is looking for so that you can align yourself with it. Highlight your strongest selling points, but don’t just restate your resume; instead, *explain HOW* your qualifications have prepared you to excel at this job. Consider your education and/or training, experience (paid jobs, internships, fieldwork, volunteer work, extracurricular involvement, etc.), skills and abilities, accomplishments in your field, personal characteristics/strengths, and any other qualifications you may have.

**Paragraph 3 (Body)**: Explain your interest in the position and the company. Just stating that you’re interested isn’t going to cut it. *It is important to employers that they are able to see that you’ve done your research on their company and on the position*; this is how they will KNOW you really want this particular job. So, do all the research you can on the company, looking for things like its mission and values, its products or services, its history and its future goals, its accomplishments, performance, reputation, etc., and find things that you identify with. Demonstrate that you’ve done your research by mentioning *specific* things about the company in explaining why it fits with your interests, goals, working style, values, etc. Don’t, however, talk about things that are all about you and not the work, like “this company pays well” or “I wouldn’t have to move.” Focus instead on aligning yourself with what the company cares about – things like their mission, achievements, initiatives, etc.

**Paragraph 4 (Closing)**: Very briefly summarize the contents of your letter. Then, express your interest in an interview. Indicate how the employer can reach you. Finally, thank the employer for his or her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*(Don’t forget to SIGN your name here!)*

Your Name Typed

**SAMPLE COVER LETTER – For a Post-Graduation Job**

123 Jobseeker St.

Boise, ID 83706

January 15, 2012

Amy Jones, Director of Marketing

ABC Advertising

555 Marketing Way

Boise, ID 83706

Dear Ms. Jones:

I am writing to express my interest in the Client Development Specialist position available with ABC Advertising. I was referred to this opening by Mary Smith, Market Research Coordinator for ABC, who suggested that I might be a good fit for this role.

While working towards my Bachelor’s degree in Marketing, which I will be completing this May, I have strived to gain as much hands-on experience as possible. Four years of experience in the areas of sales, customer service, and product promotion has given me a solid background and multiple perspectives from which to understand the marketing and advertising needs of clients. Currently, I am interning at Smith and Smith Marketing Associates, for which I actively contribute to the design and development of new campaigns, and work one-on-one with existing and potential clients. In this position, I have played a significant role in recruiting new clients, and in ensuring client satisfaction throughout the development and execution of campaigns. What I feel differentiates me from others with a similar background is my ability to develop new relationships and strengthen existing ones. My experience in sales and customer service has helped me to hone critical skills in working with clients, particularly active listening, needs assessment, and establishing trust. In the current economic climate especially, an agency’s success is entirely dependent on its ability to build and maintain relationships; therefore, my goal within this position would be to combine my knowledge of the advertising process with my client development skills in order to bring in new clients and strengthen ABC’s relationships with its existing clients.

I first learned of ABC Advertising while researching ad campaigns being designed by agencies in the Treasure Valley. My fascination with your October “Make it Last” campaign led me to begin following your blog, from which I have learned a lot. One of the things I have been consistently impressed by is the transparency you demonstrate, which is something I am looking for in an agency, because it allows me to establish genuine, trusting relationships with clients more easily. In speaking with Ms. Smith to learn more about your future goals, I also learned that you are looking to continue to expand and develop a niche working with “green” companies. Because sustainability is a major interest of mine, I would love the opportunity to work with these clients, and I believe having that common ground would allow me to relate to prospective clients in an even more effective way.

I feel that the broad understanding and background I have in the advertising field, combined with my skills in relationship development, will allow me to successfully grow ABC Advertising’s client base and presence in the area. I would love to discuss this with you further, and can be reached at (555)123-4567 or at janedoe@internet.com. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to speaking with you!

Sincerely,

Jane A. Doe

**SAMPLE CONTENT – For an Internship**

While researching public relations firms, I recently discovered the internship opportunities that Western Public Relations offers. I feel that my qualifications and professional goals are well matched with what you are looking for in an intern.

As my enclosed resume indicates, I am a current student at Boise State University, working towards the completion of a Bachelors degree in Psychology. My professional goal is to apply the knowledge of human perception I am gaining through my degree to the practice of public relations. As I am entering my junior year, I am actively seeking opportunities to learn more about the field of public relations and further develop my skills in a hands-on environment. I believe that I would be a very successful intern and strong contributor. Through my previous work experiences, I have demonstrated the ability to communicate effectively with a wide variety of customers. For example, while working for Sports Authority as a Sales Associate, I had the highest sales within the store for 3 months in a row, which resulted from my ability to assess what information the customer needed to make a purchase, and effectively educate them about their product options.

The internship with Western Public Relations is especially appealing to me because of how diverse your client base is. Since I strive to be the best in all that I do, I am eager to gain as many different experiences as possible so that I can excel in working with all types of clients. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the continued success of Western while honing these skills. If possible, I would like to meet with you to further discuss this opportunity. I can be reached by phone at (208) 555- 1234, or by e-mail at JohnSmith@internet.com.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**SAMPLE CONTENT – For a Student Job**

I am writing to express my interest in the Filing Clerk position available with XYZ Company. I found out about this opening from an ad you placed on BroncoJobs, Boise State University’s job posting system.

I am currently in my first year at Boise State, studying business. Through past experiences, I have developed several skills that I feel would make me very successful as a Filing Clerk. In high school, I was the secretary of our school’s Student Event Planning Committee, which developed, planned, and executed social events such as dances, homecoming week activities, and after-hours special events. Through this experience, I developed strong organizational skills that I will bring to XYZ Company. As secretary, it was my responsibility to make sure that accurate records were taken and stored properly. I was responsible for managing documents needed to successfully execute our events, as well as records that had to be kept on file for the school’s administration. During the time I was secretary, there was never a document that was lost or misplaced.

Additionally, through my participation in team sports in high school, I developed excellent teamwork skills. I learned how to be a good follower, listen to those in authority and follow directions, and I also learned how to step up and be a leader when appropriate. I feel that I am an excellent team player overall, which will be an asset to me in this position, where I will have to carefully follow instructions from others, but also be able to be self-sufficient in my work.

I feel that my combination of organizational and teamwork abilities make me an excellent candidate for the Filing Clerk position. I would love to have the opportunity to speak with you further about how I could contribute to XYZ Company is this role. I can be reached at (208) 123-4567, or at janesmith@u.boisestate.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

**Sample cover letters**

**1. Standard, conservative style**

*This is ideal for sectors such as business, law, accountancy and retail. For more creative sectors, a letter like this might be less appealing, and could work against you.*

Dear Mr Black,

Please find enclosed my CV in application for the post advertised in the Guardian on 30 November.

The nature of my degree course has prepared me for this position. It involved a great deal of independent research, requiring initiative, self-motivation and a wide range of skills. For one course, [insert course], an understanding of the [insert sector] industry was essential. I found this subject very stimulating.

I am a fast and accurate writer, with a keen eye for detail and I should be very grateful for the opportunity to progress to market reporting. I am able to take on the responsibility of this position immediately, and have the enthusiasm and determination to ensure that I make a success of it.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this application and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

**2. Standard speculative letter**

*This may vary according to the nature of the organisation and the industry you're applying to.*

Dear Mr. Brown,

I am writing to enquire if you have any vacancies in your company. I enclose my CV for your information.

As you can see, I have had extensive vacation work experience in office environments, the retail sector and service industries, giving me varied skills and the ability to work with many different types of people. I believe I could fit easily into your team.

I am a conscientious person who works hard and pays attention to detail. I'm flexible, quick to pick up new skills and eager to learn from others. I also have lots of ideas and enthusiasm. I'm keen to work for a company with a great reputation and high profile like [insert company name].

I have excellent references and would be delighted to discuss any possible vacancy with you at your convenience. In case you do not have any suitable openings at the moment, I would be grateful if you would keep my CV on file for any future possibilities.

Yours sincerely

**3. Letter for creative jobs**

*We've used the example of a copywriter but you can adapt it for your profession. The aim of a creative letter is to be original and show you have imagination, but understand what the job entails. Balance is essential: don't be too wacky, or it will turn off the reader.*

Dear Ms Green,

· Confused by commas?   
· Puzzled by parenthesis?   
· Stumped by spelling?   
· Perturbed by punctuation?   
· Annoyed at the apostrophe? (And alliteration?)

Well, you're not alone. It seems that fewer and fewer people can write. Unfortunately, there are still a lot of people who can read. So they'll spot a gaffe from a mile off. And that means it's a false economy, unless you're 100% sure of yourself, to write your own materials. (Or to let clients do it for themselves.)

To have materials properly copywritten is, when one considers the whole process of publishing materials and the impact that the client wishes to make, a minor expense. Sloppiness loses clients, loses customers.

There is an answer. Me. Firm quotes are free. You can see some of what I do on my multilingual website at [insert web address]. If you'd like, I can get some samples out to you within 24 hours. And, if you use me, you'll have some sort of guarantee that you can sleep soundly as those tens of thousands of copies are rolling off the presses.

Luck shouldn't come into it!

With kindest regards

**More Cover Letters**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**I am writing in response to the advertisement for** the position of a sales executive in the Madrid office of your company. **I am confident that I would be an excellent candidate for** both this position and for working within a company such as your own which has a reputation for excellence and innovation.

**I am a highly motivated, diligent and committed individual**, who **throughout** my 10 year career in sales **has demonstrated** the ability of being:

Goal-Orientated - Surpassing my annual sales targets every year of my professional career.

Adaptable - Having the ability to quickly learn and use new techniques, methodologies, strategies when selling a variety of different products.

Able to speak fluently in English - I have the Cambridge Advanced Certificate in English and use English on a daily basis in my current position.

**I have extensive experience of working** as a sales executive for two large multinational companies, Almagro Construction SA and Telefonica SA. **During my time in** Telefonica I have been responsible for several multi-million euro project negotiations that **were conducted entirely in English** and lead to Telefonica obtaining contracts that totalled a value of €61.3 million.

**Please find attached a copy of my CV which expands** on my experience and achievements.

**I would welcome the opportunity to discuss further the possibility of**working for you in this position. **I am available to do an interview when it is convenient for yourselves**.

**If you have any questions, I can be reached** on either my mobile (0034 71761231) or by email (juan\_cruz871@gmail.com).

**Thank you for your time and consideration**.

Yours faithfully,

Juan Cruz

Dear Mr./Ms. LastName,

I am very interested in the entry-level position that is available at ABC Investment Partners. I recently graduated from XYZ University College and am actively seeking employment with firms in the San Francisco area. My courses in investments, finance and business have given me a solid base upon which I plan to build my career.

During my college internships, I dealt with a variety of budgets and conducted market research while handling numerous administrative duties. The experience allowed me to learn important skills and to develop the confidence needed to succeed in a competitive environment.

I have enclosed my resume for your review. Thank you for your time and consideration. It would be a pleasure to interview with you and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Dear Mr./Ms. LastName,

I am writing to apply for the position of Media Relations Manager. ABCD is a fast-moving global institution and an outstanding communications pioneer, now poised to guide the direction of print journalism.

As a recent graduate of the State University with significant experience in finance, administration and media, I bring the energy and commitment to excellence necessary to thrive in ABCD's innovative environment.

As the current Media Relations Coordinator of the XYZ company, I am a practiced business liaison and an able administrator. These strengths, combined with deep and varied employment and internship experience as a journalist and media consultant with FGH and LMD, prepare me to make a strong and immediate impact at ABCD.

I am excited about the opportunity to join the ABCD team as it moves to the center of the print media conversation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature (hard copy letter)

700 Commonwealth Ave  
Boston, MA 02215  
calmcnally@yahoo.com  
555-555-555

March 17, 2011

Ella O’Donnell  
Assistant Director  
Boston International Center  
12 Todd St.  
Boston, MA 02215  
bostonintlcenter@boston.com

Dear Ms. O’Donnell,

I am interested in applying for the Assistant Social Worker position at the Boston International Center. I am a Linguistics and Comparative Language double major and International Relations minor at Boston University, and would love for the opportunity to work at the Irish International Immigration Center.

As a student at Boston University, I understand the challenges of finding employment and housing in the city and I am very familiar with Boston navigation and transportation. I would love to share what I’ve learned from my own experiences with other young people who are looking for housing and jobs, a key part of this position as mentioned in the position description. As a young person in Boston, I have both personal and professional experience with the hunt for housing and jobs, as I have been through the rigors of finding my own housing in Boston, and also interned with the Boston University Career Services Center.

In addition, I have strong communication skills that would be very useful for this internship. This past fall, I interned full-time for a Massachusetts senator in the Democratic Headquarters. Coupled with being responsible for online research regarding electoral issues, I interacted directly with voters, politicians, and congressmen, sharpening my communication abilities on all levels. I believe that my prior work experience provides a solid foundation for the duties of the Assistant Social Worker position.

As a young Bostonian, I would look forward to helping others make the most out of their Boston experience. I am outgoing and personable, yet also a responsible worker. Thank you very much for your consideration! I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Cal McNally

=======

Jennifer Delancey

12 Linden St.

Boston, MA 02215

555.555.555

[jdelancey@greaterboston.edu](mailto:jdelancey@greaterboston.edu)

March 17,

20XXCambridge Editorial, Inc.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am interested in applying for the summer editorial position at Cambridge Editorial, Inc. As an English and Journalism double major and at The College of Greater Boston, I have strong literary skills and completed by freshman year with a 3.9 GPA and Dean’s List Standing. Coupled with my passion for writing, I also have sharp analytical abilities and well-developed communication skills.

In addition to my academic background, I have real-life experience that pertains to the internship. This winter, I was an intern at the Central Massachusetts Newspaper and Magazine Publishing House. One of my primary responsibilities was reviewing and editing reader submissions regarding Boston restaurants, music venues, and cultural events for various newspapers and magazines in the New England area. Additionally, I performed comprehensive research on Boston restaurants and was responsible for coherently organizing the information I found. I also independently obtained, edited, and presented diner reviews, sharpening my communication skills as well as my organizational and editorial abilities.

In addition, I am a Senior Editor for my college newspaper and have also volunteered on the Review Committee that accepts and edits students’ submissions of commentaries, editorials, and both fiction and non-fiction work. In addition, I pioneered the development of a university-sponsored online blog site that publishes student reviews of local restaurants, bars, clubs, and activities in the city, and am responsible for the reviewing and editing of these submissions. I am eager to apply these skills to a position at Cambridge Editorial, Inc.

Thank you very much for your consideration! If you have any questions, feel free to contact me via e-mail or by phone. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Delancey

Dear Ms. Donald,

I am interested in applying for the scientific research summer internship position that was listed through the Name University Career Services Office.

I have had a great deal of laboratory experience in chemistry, biology, and geology, both indoors and in the field. In the lab, I have performed chemical reactions and I am currently using microscopes to observe many specimens. In environmental field studies, I have conducted outdoor labs to assess water chemistry.

Last summer, I worked as conservation assistant at Clumber National Park. I am seeking to complement this outdoor experience with a research internship in order to acquire the background necessary for a future career in scientific research.

I believe that I would be an asset to your program. This internship would provide me with the ideal opportunity to assist at your organization and to expand my research skills.

I will call next week to see if you agree that my qualifications seem to be a match for the position. If so, I hope to schedule an interview at a mutually convenient time. I look forward to speaking with you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Donaldson

8 Sue Circle

Smithtown, CA 08067

909-555-5555

[john.donaldson@emailexample.com](mailto:john.donaldson@emailexample.com)

George Gilhooley

XYZ Company

87 Delaware Road

Hatfield, CA 08065

Dear Mr. Gilhooley,

I am writing to apply for the programmer position advertised in the Times Union. As requested, I am enclosing a completed job application, my certification, my resume, and three references.

The opportunity presented in this listing is very interesting, and I believe that my strong technical experience and education will make me a very competitive candidate for this position. The key strengths that I possess for success in this position include:

I have successfully designed, developed, and supported live use applications

I strive for continued excellence

I provide exceptional contributions to customer service for all customers

With a BS degree in Computer Programming, I have a full understanding of the full life cycle of a software development project. I also have experience in learning and excelling at new technologies as needed.

Please see my resume for additional information on my experience. I can be reached anytime via email at john.donaldson@emailexample.com or my cell phone, 909-555-5555.Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you about this employment opportunity.

Sincerely,

Signature (for hard copy letter)

1000 Holt Avenue

Winter Park, FL 32789

September 14, 2001

Ms. Alberta Lee

Human Resources Specialist

Goldman Snacks

111 Goldfish Avenue Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Ms. Lee:

As an MBA student at the Crummer Graduate School of Business, Rollins College, I am pursuing a brand management position with Goldman Snacks, a premier food manufacturing company. My resume is enclosed for your review.

With over two years of marketing and management experience from Pizza Hut, Inc., I can offer your firm a broad skill set with an emphasis on creativity and analysis. My marketing strategies at Pizza Hut led to a 150% increase in sales volume coupled with a profit increase of over 200%. Additionally, as a Marketing Representative for Neon Concepts, Inc., I assisted in obtaining large corporate accounts such as Vuarnet France, Science Diet, Nordica, Ray Ban, and Rollerblade.

My education from Rollins College and past experience within the PepsiCo family will enable me to help bring your company’s products and services to the premier position in each of their respective markets. I understand that one of Goldman Snacks’ strategic initiatives is to develop a partnership with restaurants in order to distribute its products more effectively. My experience at Pizza Hut and understanding of the fast food business can provide valuable insight in pursuing this initiative.

I would very much like to meet with you to discuss career opportunities. I plan to be in the Chicago area the week of October 9. For your convenience, I will call you next week to discuss my candidacy. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kate Sullivan

Enclosure

January 23, 2002

Mr. James Jones, HR Director

Fly Right Avionics Enterprises 1212 Spring Street

Los Angeles, California 90211

Dear Mr. Jones,

This letter is to express my interest in brining my years of experience in airline operation and ground security to your firm. In these troubled times, I know I can add to public safety and security in the transportation industry.

As my enclosed resume indicates, my background includes more than two decades of services at US Airways with significant experience in: 

* Aircraft accident investigation as a member of the US Airways disaster team.
* Security checkpoints where I handled countless calls for assistance 
* Training the Ground Security team to protect and promote public safety

In addition to the above skills, I can offer your firm: 

* More than 30 years of experience in the airlines industry. 
* Expertise in dealing with government agencies, including the FAA where I facilitated communications to reduce company fines. 
* Reduced absenteeism and occupational injuries, standards I maintained at US Airways where I achieved the best employee safety record of all IS Airways cities.

With world events necessitating the highest standards in airport security and employees’ performance, my extensive experience can help meet those needs. I will be calling you within the following week to schedule an interview so that we might discuss this matter further. Until then, should you have any question, I can be reached at the number listed above.

Sincerely,

Russell Morgan

September 16, 2001

Ms. Martha F. Farlington

Executive Vice President

Fin Tube, Inc.

200 East Commerce Blvd. Tampa, FL 18273

Dear Ms. Farlington:

In response to your September 15th ad in the Orlando Sentinel for an Assistant Director, Sales & Marketing, I have enclosed my resume. I appear to fit the candidate specifications as detailed in your ad.

Specifically, I hold an MBA in Finance and Marketing and have over three years of marketing and sales management experience. As Marketing Associate for Fuel Jet Carburetors, I managed a 10 employee marketing and field sales organization that sold automotive carburetors to car and truck engine manufacturers. During the last year in this capacity, my marketing and sales strategies led to a 250% increase in sales volume coupled with a profit increase of nearly 300%. I am known for being a key contributor to the business planning process and am credited with revitalizing and motivating the marketing and sales organization through creative leadership.

I understand that Fin Tube, Inc. is currently restructuring its sales force in an effort to increase sales volume. My leadership skills and active role in developing successful sales strategies would be an asset to this initiative. Fin Tube’s corporate principals further enhance my interest in the economy. Specifically, your goal of providing superior quality while delighting the customer with unbeatable service caught my attention. In fact, while reading your corporate principles, I saw a direct correlation to my personal mission statement. Because of this, Fin Tube has become a primary target in my career search.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to explore how I might bring added value to Fin Tube’s marketing and sales effort. I will call your office on the morning of September 21st to inquire if a meeting can be scheduled at a convenient time. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lanai Kline

Enclosure