

# Cover Letters and Other Correspondence



A cover letter can be an essential part of your correspondence with employers. When an option, you should **always** include a cover letter with your resume. While the resume provides an overview of your background, the cover letter allows you the opportunity to highlight those aspects of your background that are relevant to the position you are seeking. A good letter can help heighten the employer's incentive to learn more about you by reading your resume and meeting you for an interview. It also gives the employer a sample of your writing skills.

## Examples of cover letters and other correspondence

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All of these types of correspondence should be written in business letter style and addressed to a specific person. These letters should be typed and a copy of each should be kept for your records.

## Cover Letter Formats

A cover letter is most effective when it is tailored to the particular conditions of the organization or job. It is best (although not required) to have the same font as your resume. When possible, letters should be addressed to an individual, preferably an employment or personnel manager or a

supervisor in a department of interest, rather than to "Dear Sir" or "Dear Madam." Names of persons to contact may be obtained by checking CAVLink or company sites. For the most up-to-date and accurate information on contact names, it is beneficial to call the company directly. Ask for the appropriate person's name and title, and be sure to obtain the correct spelling. This is also a good time to ask for the phone number or e-mail for that person so you can follow up later. If you are unable to identify a specific person to whom to address the letter, "Dear Hiring Manager", "Dear Intern Coordinator", and "Dear Search Committee" are appropriate salutations.

## **Standard Cover Letter Format**

### **1. The Introduction**

The first paragraph states why you are writing, names the type of position, mentions how you heard about it (if you have heard about a vacancy), and addresses what interests you about the company or position. If a person referred you, mention the person's name. Keep this paragraph short. It must attract enough attention to cause the reader to want to read the rest of your letter and your resume. This is your chance to show them you have researched the company.

### **2. The Body**

The main body of your letter, which may be one or two paragraphs long, should detail what you could contribute to the company and how your qualifications could benefit the firm. Keep in mind that your resume is general enough to use with many employers and that the cover letter links that resume (and you) to a specific employer. The body of your letter should further reflect the research you have done on the employer and elaborate on your interests and experience. You should be careful not to reiterate everything that is on the resume; however, you might mention a few key aspects of your background and provide more detail about them than is contained in the resume.

The more you know about the employer through research, the more you can link your qualifications to the specific position.

### **3. The Closing Paragraph**

The closing paragraph must make it clear what action you will take to follow up. Keep the initiative on your side. Stating that you will wait to hear from the employer more often than not results in just that... waiting. Instead, you should request an interview and tell the employer that you will call him or her within a specific period of time. However, only include this statement only if you have the means (i.e. phone number) with which to follow-up. It is helpful to include your phone number here in case your resume and letter become separated once they reach the employer.

## Additional Formats

In addition to the traditional format, you may also choose from the word bullet and two-column formats to make your cover letter more direct and to the point.

The **word bullet** format breaks up the text by highlighting words or phrases from the job posting you are responding to. By pulling these words out of the announcement, you can focus your letter sharply on how you possess the skills the employer is seeking.

As its name suggests, the middle section of the **two-column** letter is split into two columns. The left-hand column should list the employer's requirements as outlined in the job advertisement, while the right-hand column describes the skills you have that match those requirements. This is a very effective format to use when you possess all or most of the required and preferred qualifications of the job. Also, it works better when applying to more technical positions where it is not as necessary for you to show strong writing skills which are better demonstrated by the traditional narrative style cover letter format.

These formats make visual connections between your qualifications and the requirements of the position to which you are applying. The word bullet and two-column formats both start out in the same way as the standard cover letter. Your first paragraph should mention the position you're applying for, and should be designed to immediately grab the reader's attention. The last paragraph will end with a sentence that restates your suitability for and interest in the position and follows up with a reference to an interview. However, the body of the letter in these special formats is very different.

## Thank You Letters

Thank you notes are a must in the job search process. Letters should be sent within 2-3 days and no longer than a week after the interview. However, send the letter even if you lose track of time. A late thank you note is better than no note at all. If you have decided that you are no longer interested in a particular position, it is wise to send a thank you note anyway. You never know when you will need to contact that employer in the future. It is better to leave all your options open.

Thank you letters may be handwritten, typed, or e-mailed; it's a personal preference. Thank you notes should always be written to the person with whom you had the interview. Even if you were asked to address the interviewer by the first name during the interview, play it safe and use their title and last name in the letter. Many times during the second or even an initial interview, you may meet with more than one person during the course of the day. If you are interested in pursuing opportunities with the company, it is advisable to write each person a thank you note. Don't use a form letter; try to individualize each letter by writing something you learned or discussed. Writing a letter to each person you have met makes a favorable impression.

**Figure 1** (Be sure to center the letter on the page. Lines may be added to this area to bring the letter down on the page.)

Your Name  
 Street Address  
 City, State, Zip  
 Phone and Email Address

Current date  
( 4 to 8 lines, depending on how many you need to center letter)

Employer's Name  
Title  
Department  
Organization  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip  
(1 line)

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr./individual's name:  
(1 line)

[illegible][illegible]

CLOSEXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

(1 line)

Very truly yours, (Sincerely, Sincerely yours, Truly yours, etc.)

**(3 lines; be sure to sign your name in this space)**

Typed Name  
(2 lines)

Encl. resume (indicates that there is an attachment, in this case, a resume)

**Figure 2** *Cover letter seeking an internship*

**Casey Amore**  
2354 West Main St.  
Charlottesville, VA 22904

March 31, 2007

Ms. Amanda Lesser  
Florida Studios  
1290 Studio Plaza  
Orlando, Florida 32819-7610

Dear Ms. Lesser,

My previous work experience and leadership roles make me an ideal candidate for a summer internship with Florida Studios. During a recent conversation with your Sales Manager, Felicia Marcal, I found out that your company has an excellent reputation for customer satisfaction. I know that the combination of my experience, education, and motivation to excel will make me an asset to your marketing department.

My experience in sales and customer service, combined with my courses in psychology, have convinced me that hospitality marketing is a career option that would suit me well. In my position with Drake Productions last year, I was recognized as the top sales associate in their summer program. I am sure that I can put this same skill to use for you, and yet continue to improve upon it as I learn from some of the top marketing executives in the business.

I look forward to contacting you within a week to talk about the possibility of an interview. Should you have any questions before that time, you may reach me via phone (386-555-2922) or via email (cra8z@virginia.edu).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Casey Amore

Enclosure: Resume

**Figure 3** *Cover letter seeking an employment interview*

**Mariana Suarez**

103A Circle Ave.  
Charlottesville, VA 22905  
(743-700-1234)  
suarez@virginia.edu

September 30, 2008

Mr. Steven Smith  
Flight and Ticket Recruiter  
Pan American Airlines  
Miami International Airport  
Miami, Florida 32195

Dear Mr. Smith:

While reviewing an article in the Wall Street Journal recently, I learned that your company is planning to assume a portion of Pan American Airlines' routes to South America. Many of your new customers will be the Hispanic populations of Miami, New York, Dallas and the South American countries you intend to serve. No doubt, you will be interested in increasing the number of bilingual personnel in these cities. In this regard, I possess the skills and interest to be of benefit to PanAm Airlines.

As a native of Puerto Rico, I received a comprehensive bilingual education. As the enclosed resume indicates, I will be graduating with a major in English from the University of Virginia next May and am completely bilingual in written as well as oral English and Spanish. My customer service and conflict resolution skills will also serve as an asset as I am prepared to handle customer and organizational challenges that arise daily within the airline industry.

I look forward to using my leadership skills to assist with customer service and conflict resolution in situations when challenges arise. My involvement as the Vice President of the Latino Student Union has prepared me for recognizing the most appropriate methods in identifying problems and offering solutions, along with developing methods for troubleshooting areas of concerns. These skills, along with my positive attitude and strong work ethic, will work to your advantage in meeting the needs of the new Hispanic population you will be serving.

I will be in Miami the week of October 14-17<sup>th</sup>, 2008, and would appreciate the opportunity to meet with someone within your office to discuss my qualifications for a full-time entry-level position within your organization. Within the next two weeks I will contact you to determine if it is possible to connect with someone during my visit to the Miami area. Thank you for your time and consideration of my qualifications.

Respectfully,

Mariana Suarez  
Enclosure

**Figure 4** *Cover letter responding to job posting with salary requirement*

**Thomas Browne**

432 Holly Street  
Waynesboro, VA 22930  
(434) 924-8900  
tbrowe@virginia.edu

April 3, 2009

Mr. Alfred Winslow  
Senior Partner  
Research Services, Inc.  
325 East Avenue  
Washington, DC 00000

Dear Mr. Winslow:

I am a fourth year student in Commerce and Economics at the University of Virginia. Your position of Health Research Analyst listed on CAVLink caught my attention. In learning more about your company, I found that you place an emphasis on Health Research and Analysis. I was pleased to see that you have a multi-disciplinary staff devoted to research and analysis of a wide variety of health issues for several different organizations and federal agencies.

As my resume indicates, I have extensive experience researching and preparing reports, as well as a strong background in the social sciences, with a special interest in the field of health. My interest in the business world is reflected in my coursework in commerce and economics. Moreover, I believe that I would find the special projects in investigating patterns and predictors of health behaviors and epidemiological outcomes for specific population groups most interesting. I am quite familiar with qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques and would greatly enjoy assisting your company in incorporating this knowledge into specific research initiatives as appropriate. I have run focus group discussions, performed personal interviews, cross-sectional and cohort mail and telephone surveys, and analysis of data sets submitted to federal agencies. These also were listed as some examples of the methods employed by your staff to address health behavior, epidemiological, and health policy questions. Therefore, I see a very good fit between your needs and my interests and abilities.

Based on the description and my research, I am expecting a salary between \$35,000-\$40,000 for this job, 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.

I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you in person during an on-site interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Thomas Browne

## Figure 5      *Word bullet cover letter*

Cell: 434-555-3214

pday@virginia.edu

567 Kings Court, Charlottesville, VA 22901

### PRINCESS DAY

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March 15, 2009

Dana Prince  
Human Resources Manager  
Novell  
404 Wyman Street  
Waltham, MA 02451

Dear Dana Prince:

Please accept this cover letter and the attached resume as an indication of my sincere interest in your entry-level consultant position. From meeting with employees of Novell at a presentation held on the campus of the University of Virginia and reviewing your website, I believe I have a solid understanding of what makes a successful consultant. As a recent graduate, I offer exactly the qualities you seek:

***Quantitative Skills:*** Consultants deal with numbers daily. Having completed a major in math, I am very comfortable with conducting statistical analysis, extracting significant data and drawing inferences from graphical information. I possess the skills necessary for developing cost efficient product deployment plans.

***Communication Skills:*** I am an extrovert who loves to work with people from diverse backgrounds. While in college, I tutored students at risk of dropping out of the local high school. I will use the skills I honed in this role to develop rapport with clients, listen attentively to their presenting problems and deliver effective oral presentations on proposed solutions.

***Teamwork Skills:*** I participated in several group projects in the elective courses I took through the McIntire School of Commerce, and my ability to function as both a team player and a leader resulted in top grades for every group to which I belonged. Additionally, I exhibited teamwork skills while participating in several intramural sports. I am ready to be a dedicated and hardworking member of a Novell consulting team.

In closing, I would like to emphasize how excited I am by the prospect of working alongside Novell's world-class IT consulting gurus to get clients' products in the marketplace as quickly as possible. I look forward to an interview so that I can further convince you of why I am the best candidate for the job.

Cordially,

Princess Day



## **Figure 6** *Two-column cover letter*

**TyRone B. Jenkins**

April 12, 2009

Dear Hiring Manager,

When I read the posting for a Legal Administrative Assistant on paralegaljobs.com, I realized how well the requirements aligned with my experience, education and skills. While my attached resume provides an overview of the roles I have held, as well as my accomplishments, I have listed my qualifications below. I am confident that I would be able to make an immediate contribution to your law firm.

### **Your Requirements**

B.S./B.A or paralegal certificate

Law firm experience

Experience using Microsoft Office Suite

Experience conducting online searches

Event and meeting planning experience

Attention to detail

### **My Qualifications**

Earned B.A. in History from the University of Virginia, GPA of 3.53

Interned for two summers at financial services legal firm in Washington, DC

Completed training course on Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Outlook

Conducted research for independent study project using Lexis-Nexis and Bloomberg

Scheduled training sessions, made site assignments and confirmed travel arrangements for 45 volunteers during year-long service project

Served as editor of university newspaper

I will be relocating to New York, NY in two weeks and would be available for an interview at that time. I look forward to your response! I can be reached at [tjenkins@gmail.com](mailto:tjenkins@gmail.com) or (703) 569-5633.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Best regards,

Tyrone Jenkins

**Figure 7** *Thank you letter following an on-Grounds interview*

**Lisa M. Snow**  
333 Jefferson Park Ave.  
Charlottesville VA 22903  
(434) 924-8902  
lmsnow@virginia.edu

October 18, 2008

Mr. Stuart R. Robinson  
Director of Personnel  
EFG Corporation  
323 Arden Street  
Plain View, NC 23492

Dear Mr. Robinson:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview with you on Friday, October 17th at the University of Virginia's University Career Services. The management trainee position at EFG Corporation we discussed is of great interest to me and I am confident I could fulfill the exciting responsibilities required of the person in this position.

I was particularly impressed to learn more about the various phases of the management training program. As we discussed, I have had numerous leadership positions at the University of Virginia which have prepared me to meet the supervisory challenges and demands your program presents. In addition, my double major in history and English has required extensive writing and public speaking assignments which would also allow me to succeed as a manager at EFG Corporation.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I look forward to learning more about the next step in the application process and to possibly working for your organization in the near future.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Snow

**Figure 8** *Letter accepting a job offer*

**Noelle Simpson**

500 Green Court  
Charlottesville, VA 22901  
(434) 243-3509

April 3, 2007

Ms. Laurie Breeden  
Editor  
Imagination  
Emerald City, OZ 00000

Dear Ms. Breeden:

Thank you for the time you have spent considering me for the position of editorial assistant. I am very appreciative of your efforts and also those of Mr. Ken McKain who discussed the position with me and gave me the tour of your offices. It really helped me gain an understanding of the needs of the position and how Imagination is created and produced.

I am very pleased to accept your offer for the editorial assistant position at the salary of \$32,000. I am looking forward to beginning to work with Mr. McKain and his staff on the "science works" section. The opportunity to use my writing skills in conjunction with the science background I acquired as an Environmental Sciences major attracted me to this opportunity from the time my friend, Jennifer McKain, told me about her father's work.

I will be moving to Emerald City in early May and will begin work on May 10, as we discussed. I will call you when I know what my new address and telephone number will be.

Please let me know if there is any other information you need or if any other details need to be worked out. Thank you again for offering me this opportunity. I eagerly look forward to becoming part of the Imagination team.

Sincerely,

Noelle Simpson

**Figure 9** *Cover letter requesting an informational interview from an alumnus*

**Gail S. Jennings**

28 East Ridgemont Road  
Charlottesville VA 22903

November 3, 2008

Mr. David Johnson  
Senior Vice President  
Investment Banking Division  
NationsBank  
One NationsBank Plaza  
Charlotte, NC 28209

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I recently met with Brian Mahoney, who suggested that you might be willing to provide me with excellent information about banking careers. I am preparing to graduate from the University of Virginia in May 2009 with a bachelor's degree in English. Through some career exploration I have confirmed that work in the banking industry is consistent with my interests and abilities and am trying to ascertain the best strategies for getting into the field. Would you be willing to meet briefly with me to share your insight into the banking industry and any suggestions you may have about finding banking employment? Just to be clear, I am seeking advice from you; I will not ask you for a job.

Thank you very much for even considering my request. I will call your office next week to see if I can set up a time to speak with you. If it would be convenient for you, perhaps we could meet while I am in Charlotte during winter break. If you would like to contact me, I can be reached at 434-555-5555 or gailsj@virginia.edu. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Gail S. Jennings

**Figure 10** *Letter declining a job offer*

**Cathy S. Deen**

17 Oakhurst Circle  
Charlottesville VA 22903

April 2, 2007

Ms. Paula Powell  
Personnel Officer  
McIntire of Virginia Bank  
701 East Main Street  
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear Ms. Powell:

Thank you again for your offer to become a Management Trainee at McIntire of Virginia Bank. I regret, however, that I must decline the offer. An opportunity with a large financial services organization in a city close to my home in Kentucky has emerged that I just cannot turn down.

I enjoyed my visit to McIntire of Virginia. You and the other people at the bank have treated me with the utmost kindness and respect. I am impressed with the way you managed all your recruiting efforts at the University of Virginia. As I reassess my career at the natural stages of its development, I hope that you will consider continued communication with me concerning employment opportunities.

Thank you again, and I look forward to speaking with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Cathy S. Deen

/csd