



GUIDE TO: COVER LETTER WRITING



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Table of Contents

Preparation.....	3
Why do I need a Cover Letter.....	3
Cover Letter Formatting.....	3
Writing the Cover Letter.....	4
Elements of a Cover Letter.....	3-4
Common Mistakes.....	5
Helpful Resources.....	6
Cover Letter Samples.....	7-9

Why do I need a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is the companion document to the resume; it is an introductory letter that guides an employer through your resume. A well-written, well-set up cover letter will encourage an employer to read your resume the way you want it read. The letter will highlight your specific skills and traits for the job, point out your related experiences, and explain how you will perform on the job.

Cover letters absolutely are necessary. You should begin to think of Resume and Cover Letter as one word: Resumecoverletter. When someone asks for your resume, you also provide the cover letter.

The cover letter works to subconsciously tell the employer how to read your resume. You will point out the most important and relevant



Cover Letter Formatting

A cover letter should be written as a standard business or professional format. Always address your cover letters to the person who is responsible for initiating the review process or for making the ultimate hiring decision. Avoid sending your letters to “To Whom it May Concern”, “Dear Sir or Madame”, “Personnel Director”. Make a phone call if necessary to find out the name and title of the individual to whom you are writing and confirm the address of the organization. If you still are unable to find a person to direct your letter to a safe option is to address the letter to “Dear Hiring Manager”.

Margins	No less than 1” wide on all sides
Font	Professional fonts such as Times New Roman, Calibri, etc. Use the same font as your resume
Text	Single Spaced
Paragraphs	Do not indent your paragraphs – flush them left.

Elements of a Cover letter

Date & Contact Information

Date the letter and include the contact information of the employer.

Paragraph #1 - The Opening

1-3 sentences

The opening statement is designed to be quick, to the point, and answer a specific question – what do you want? Be sure to let them know exactly what you are applying for. You can give a little introduction to yourself and the position you are applying for. Inform the employer how you heard of the position. If you heard about the position through a mutual contact, make sure that you provide that person's name.

Paragraph #2 – Skills for the Job

3-5 sentences

Before writing this paragraph you should review the job description to target specific qualifications that match your own – and then make the case that you have the skills for the position. Focus on how you can apply your strengths, achievements, skills and abilities to the position. You can highlight specific experiences, but do not re-write your resume all over again. From this paragraph you want the employer to be intrigued enough by your relevant skills for the position that they look for these exact skills and experiences on your resume.

Paragraph #3 – Your Personal Competencies for the Job

2-4 sentences

All job types have particular personalities associated with them – sales reps are outgoing and energetic; accountants are accurate, organized, and detailed. In this section, present yourself as having the personal competencies that are right for this position, and that will make you excel. Focus on highly sought after competencies you possess, such as critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal communication, global awareness, and flexibility. Choose only those competencies you can support with specific examples.

Paragraph #4 – Additional Information

1-3 sentences

This is a space to put any additional requested or desired information the employer may want or need to know. This can include salary information (only if asked), start dates, hours per week available (internships), willingness to travel, etc.

Paragraph #5 – The Closing

2-3 sentences

Thank the employer for their consideration, and request an interview to further discuss your qualifications.

Sincerely and Your Name

Use a sign off (Sincerely) and type your name. If physically handing the letter to someone, sign between Sincerely and your printed name.

Check out our video tutorial for Cover Letters at
www.unhcareercenter.com!

Common Cover Letter Mistakes

Repeating your resume

While it is fine to refer to your resume, do not regurgitate it. Highlight specific skills and experiences from your resume, but let the resume provide the details. Your cover letter should **NEVER** be more than one page!

Using one cover letter for many positions

It's not professional to use a general letter for all positions. Remember, you are explaining how you qualify for a **particular position** with a **particular company or organization**. You need to **CUSTOMIZE** each letter to each individual position

Include negative information

Don't include any information that is negative, whether it is about yourself and your skills (or lack of); a previous employer; the organization or position you're currently applying for. They won't even read your resume if you do this!

Lying or Embellishment

Don't lie or embellish facts. This should be an obvious one, yet people still do it.

Including personal information

The purpose of a cover letter is to explain what position you are interested in and why you should be granted an interview for that position. Your cover letter should **NEVER** contain any information about your personal, non-work life!

Using a non-professional tone

Make sure that your letter is written in a professional manner. Do not use metaphors, clichés, or slang. Your letter should **NOT** read as you would speak to a friend. Make sure you **USE SPELL CHECK!**



Helpful Resources

Cover Letter Tutorial: The UNH Career Development Center has an online video tutorial on how to write an effective cover letter. In 10 minutes you can learn the basic structure and content to write your first draft. Be sure to have your draft reviewed by the CDC!

<http://unhcareercenter.com/>

Charger Career Link: Through UNH's online system you can post your cover letter for review by a professional Career Advisor. We will review, edit, and make suggestions to get your letter in top shape. We also review resumes through the system!

<http://unhcareercenter.com/>

Helpful Web Links:

Article on cover letter writing:

http://www.quintcareers.com/cover_letters.html

Article with tips, pointers, and links to samples

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverletters>

More samples for a variety of positions:

<http://www.employmentspot.com/employment-articles/sample-cover-letter-for-position-opening/>

Sample Cover Letters

Date

Mr. John Doe
XYZ Company
P.O. Box 623
New Haven CT 06512

Dear Mr. Doe:

In the interest of exploring an entry-level Marketing position at XYZ Company, I submit my resume for your review.

As you can see from my resume, I have hands-on experience in developing marketing logos, slogans, and campaigns from my college coursework and my internships. This experience includes working with a team to brainstorm new ideas, meeting with clients and potential clients to analyze needs and design new programs, and preparing media kits, mass mailings, and updating website content. Through class projects I have analyzed the marketing campaigns of major corporations and evaluated their overall effectiveness; in addition I worked as part of a team to create a new marketing campaign for a local non-profit organization. I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Business/Marketing and graduated with honors.

My strong writing skills, outgoing personality, and professional communication skills make me an ideal candidate for a position in Marketing. I am a hard-working, motivated, and deadline oriented individual who will work to meet the needs of your clients while representing your firm with the utmost professionalism.

I am willing to take on any additional training or to travel as part of this position. My salary requirements are in the low thirties, but I am open and negotiable for this opportunity.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to meeting with you personally to further discuss the position and my qualifications.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

September 13, 2013

Ms. Lindsey Savin
HR Coordinator
Crime Fighters
25 Palm Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Dear Ms. Savin:

As a Criminal Justice major at the University of New Haven, I have a comprehensive understanding of both federal and state governments. I realize that working in a government setting I would have to integrate the theory I have learned throughout my coursework to the daily workings of the government. For this reason I am greatly interested in the Assistant Analyst Internship position this spring.

I would be an asset as an intern in your office based on the strong research and analyzing skills I developed over my past three years at the University of New Haven. In addition to many papers written for class, I have completed an internship with the Federal Bureau of Investigation last summer. As an intern I had hands on experience in the investigation of airline hijackings and hostage situations. I can contribute the knowledge of how to perform and analyze an investigation to the internship.

Working extensively with the campus community as a Resident Assistant has helped me to gain leadership and communication skill. Supervisor of over sixty resident students, I effectively managed conflict and developed programs designed to develop cohesiveness throughout the residence hall. The skills I have gained in campus leadership will directly benefit this position.

I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration for the Assistant Analyst intern position. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my qualifications and the position further. Please contact me at (763) 384-3676 or William.H.Cooper@gmail.com to schedule an interview.

Sincerely,

William H. Cooper

November 1, 2013

Mr. John Thompson
Human Resources Manager
ABC Company
1112 Main Street
New Haven, CT 06511

Dear Mr. Thompson:

As a recent graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing, the Sales/Marketing Coordinator position at ABC Company greatly appeals to me. I learned of this opportunity through the Career Development Center at the University of New Haven.

Through my internship experience, I acquired skills in effective client communication and project creation. I assisted with coordinating meetings and conducting client presentations to ensure efficient service and product delivery. Additionally, I have taken courses in areas such as Consumer Behavior and Marketing Services which compliment my real world experience. Due to my interest in sales and previous retail experience, I added a Professional Sales minor to my academic program. My educational background and skills would enhance the current work produced by the ABC Company.

I noted that the ABC Company delivers a full range of comprehensive services to clients in areas such as social media, branding and advertising. I would be excited to contribute my creativity and team approach to build these services even further. Also, I appreciate your commitment to the community through your pro bono work and "sweat equity." I value volunteerism as well and have been a mentor at the Boys and Girls Club for five years.

Please contact me at 203-555-1234 or jdoe1@unh.newhaven.edu to discuss my qualifications for the Sales/Marketing Coordinator position further. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Jason Doe