

How To Write A Great Cover Letter

WHAT SHOULD YOUR COVER LETTER DO FOR YOU?

It should answer the question - Why should I hire you? It should grab the employers attention and point out why you, above all other applicants, should be contacted for a personal interview.

YOUR ADDRESS (Do not put your name here)

TODAY'S DATE

Mr./Ms. EMPLOYER'S NAME (If you don't have one, get one!)

TITLE

COMPANY'S NAME

ADDRESS

DEAR Mr./Ms. EMPLOYER:

FIRST PARAGRAPH: This is the "why I'm writing to you" paragraph which immediately tells the employer the position you want to be considered for. This is short - usually 2-3 sentences. Points to cover:

- Why you are writing and which position you are applying for.
- How you heard about the position is irrelevant unless it is a mutual contact or recruiting program. Do not write, "I learned of this opportunity through the Career Services Office."
- Show from your research why you are interested in this position or organization. The goal is to make a connection - do this *Briefly* and *Specifically* or leave it out; sweeping statements will not work.

SECOND PARAGRAPH: This is the "why I'm qualified" paragraph. Highlight some of your most relevant experiences and qualities as they relate to the position for which you are applying. Choose 2 - 3 points you want to make about **Specific** experiences/accomplishments or about general qualities you have exhibited, and provide **Specific** examples to support those points. This paragraph will change according to the job/employer for which you are applying. This is usually the longest paragraph of the letter. You may break this paragraph into two if it looks too lengthy or if your points work best in separate paragraphs. Points to ponder:

- The first sentence should be a hard-hitting opener. It is a quick introduction, which is accomplishment-oriented and directed at the skills and qualifications needed for the job/industry.
- The body of the paragraph should provide evidence to back up what you've just claimed. Cite specific jobs/internships/activities/projects and accomplishments associated with those experiences. Use your resume to come up with some specifics, but NEVER reiterate passages from your resume word for word. Discuss why what you did is to the employer- relate the facts to the job. **Strong examples are important!**
- The final sentence is a summary of what you've discussed above. It's a good idea to mention the position title and company name to bring the reader back to the specific job in question.

FINAL PARAGRAPH: This is a short 2-4 sentences paragraph. You should refer to the enclosed resume, request an interview and let the reader know what will happen next (Contact them within specific period of time unless it is a recruiting program). It is *vital* that you thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name

Enclosure(s)

Tips to Make Your Letter Professional

Research the company and the specifics about the position so you can tailor your letter to the needs of the organization.

- Avoid using too many sentences that start with "I" or writing in the passive voice (ex. "This experience enabled me to..." or "Through my internship, I was responsible for..."); instead, make yourself the subject of each sentence and use active descriptions (ex., "In this internship, I demonstrated sound judgment and problem-solving skills on a daily basis.").
- Do not use contractions (I'd, didn't, it's).
- Spelling, grammar, or punctuation mistakes are out of the question! Cover letters are a reflection of your writing skills, so make each cover letter an example of your best work.
- Be sure to sign your letters. (Black ink is suggested)
- Keep your letter short and simple. This is not the time to tell your whole life's story.
- Have a Career Specialist review your cover letters during drop-in hours: Monday-Friday 1:30 – 4:30 and Wednesday 8:30am – 11:30am OR you can make an appointment anytime.
- Use good quality paper that matches your resume paper and envelopes.

Some Resources on the World Wide Web

- www.eresumes.com/tut_ecoverletters.html
- www.e-cv.com/submit.html

- <http://jobsearchtech.tqn.com/LIBRARY/WEEKLY/aa092997.htm>

Sample Cover Letters

Elicia Delombard
286 North 75th St. – Apt 5L
New York, NY 10021
212-555-9988

March 21, 1998

Mr. Ralph Cantor
Executive Vice President
Republican Young, Inc.
321 Marzio Rd.
Mohawk, NY 12561

Dear Mr. Cantor:

I would like to be considered for the Legal Assistant position offered at White, Case & Bothalemule. I learned of this opportunity through the New York Recruiting Consortium at Trinity College.

My high level of concentration and excellent organizational skills have helped me achieve a strong academic record at Trinity College which reflects my diligence and commitment to success. Rigorous liberal arts courses and a concentration in psychology have provided me with a first rate writing ability as well as sharp analytical, problem-solving and research skills. In my International Politics and Clinical Psychology courses, I have written papers involving in-depth research and analysis in order to prove a specific thesis. I have also developed research skills in a different capacity by compiling and analyzing data in a Research Design and Analysis class. In addition, my studying in England and France as well as taking French and Spanish classes, has greatly expanded my knowledge of different cultures and languages. My language proficiency will be an asset to a law firm with global interests.

Through challenging leadership positions, I have developed a strong sense of responsibility, effective interpersonal skills and the ability to contribute to teamwork, even in high-pressure environments. As a Resident Assistant, I successfully resolved conflicts among residents, planned social and educational programs while serving as a positive role model for my peers. With my background in liberal arts, business and leadership, I am confident that I can make a profound contribution to White, Case and Bothalemule.

Enclosed is my resume for your review. I am enthusiastic about the position and look forward to meeting with you at the Consortium in January. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elicia Delombard

Elicia Delombard

Enclosure

Sample Cover Letters

300 Summit St.
Hartford, CT 06106-3100
August 17, 1998

Ms. Arianna Rikic
Director of Recruiting
Eastern Arbor
225 East 72nd Street
New York, NY 10098

Dear Ms. Rikic:

Laura Flannigan suggested I contact you concerning the Marketing position available at Eastern Arbor. I am inspired to pursue my marketing interests at Eastern Arbor due to its reputation as a prestigious, innovative and growing company in liability policies.

My diverse and intense academic, professional, and leadership experiences would make me a valuable asset to Eastern PG Arbor. Currently, as a professional Student Admissions Associate, I assist in promoting Trinity College to prospective students and parents. I am responsible for interviewing and evaluating students as well as leading group information sessions. Since I work with people every day in a business setting, I have developed strong interpersonal and communication skills.

My leadership experience, particularly with the President's Special Council on Women, is another example of my strong sense of responsibility and motivation. As a council member concerned with the rights of women, I have brought fierce new ideas onto the agenda, such as bringing student leaders together to discuss how to create a more active community at Trinity. As a result of this idea, the council along with other student leaders has begun planning a leadership forum for next semester. In all of my business experiences, my motivation and energy has ignited me to work hard and accomplish goals.

My resume and transcript are enclosed for your evaluation. I will contact you on the week of August 30th to schedule a time in which I may further discuss my qualifications for the Marketing position. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Marty E. Spruce

Marty E. Spruce

Enclosures