

Guidelines for Writing Cover Letters

1. Write to a Particular Individual

Never address a letter, "To whom it may concern", no one needs junk mail
Always try to address a letter to a specific person, by name and title
Women should always be addressed as Ms., unless you know otherwise
When a name absolutely cannot be found, skip three spaces and begin your letter with no salutation

2. Provide an Appropriate Opening

State the reason for your correspondence
Refer to any prior contacts if appropriate
Refer to advertisement, where and when you learned about the position
Mention that your resume is attached

3. Personalize Your Content

Don't send the same form letter to everyone:
"Yes, Dave Smith, you have won one of the following useless and cheap prizes"
The content of the letter should reflect specific knowledge of the employer i.e.

- Major Products and Services
- Industry Ranking
- Future Plans
- Competitors

4. Target Your Skills and Experience

Your cover letter should reflect knowledge of the position and employer's needs
Emphasize skills that are most compatible with the needs of the employer and the requirements of the position
Present any relevant background information that may be of particular interest to the employer
Try to use similar phrases and terminology that is in the job description

5. Define the Next Step

Be assertive and confident, not aggressive or arrogant
Clearly indicate what you will do next:
"I will contact you on ... to verify receipt of this correspondence."
"I will contact you on ... to discuss possible opportunities to contribute to ..."
It is not recommended that you close the letter and leave it up to the employer to contact you, it really is not their responsibility
Use specific date as the contact time (and actually contact them) such as
"I will contact you on January 12, 2000 to..."

6. Make Absolutely NO Errors

Review the letters carefully for typographical, grammatical, or other errors
Have one or two others proof your materials as well

7. Use an Appropriate Format and Stationery

Standard business correspondence style is acceptable
Use good quality resume paper that matches your resume
A 9 ½ by 13 inch envelope is acceptable, this avoids folding the resume
Use address labels (typed, not handwritten)

NOTE: Always send a **Thank You Letter** after every interview. Refer to last page of this packet.

GENERAL FORMAT FOR A COVER LETTER

Remember:

- Use complete title and address.
- Address the letter to an individual.
- Make the addressee want to read your resume!
- Show personality and enthusiasm in the letter!
- Be brief and specific - your resume contains the details.
- Keep margins equal, center letter on page.
- Recommended margins: Top/Bottom 1 inch; Right/Left 1.5 inch.
- Always sign your letter!
- Indicate enclosure if attaching your resume

Format:

Location	Item
1 inch from top of page	Applicant's Address City, State, Zip
2 hard returns (enters)	Date
2 hard returns	Employer's Name Title Address City, State, Zip
2 hard returns	Salutation:
2 hard returns	First Paragraph
2 hard returns	Second Paragraph
2 hard returns	Closing Paragraph
2 hard returns	Sincerely,
4 hard returns	Your Name (typed)
2 hard returns	enclosure

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

John Q. Applicant
USA Box 1234
Mobile, Alabama 12345

January 5, 20XX

Mr. Thomas Sheridan
Vice-President
Mercy Hospital
456 Knollwood Road
Waterproof, Louisiana 19433

Dear Mr. Sheridan:

I am writing in response to your job listing in the January 4, 20XX edition of the *National Employment Business Weekly* for a Chief Financial Officer.

Currently, I am Chief Operating Officer for the Connecticut Medical Center (CMC) and have served in this capacity for five years. At this point, I am interested in the challenges a larger hospital will have to offer. During my years at CMC, I have overseen two bond financing projects, negotiated a class action suit that had threatened to shut down our facility, and increased our profitability by 24 percent.

I believe the advertised position matches well with my background and professional goals. I would appreciate being given the opportunity to interview for this position, and I will contact you January 12, 20XX to make interview arrangements. Thank you for this opportunity. I look forward to meeting with you shortly to discuss my qualifications.

Sincerely,

John Q. Applicant

enclosure

Position Acceptance Letter

James Sharpe
18 Central Park Street
Anytown, New York 14788
(516) 555-1212

January 10, 20XX

Phillip Jones
President
ABC Corporation
1 Industry Plaza
Anytown, New York 12096

Dear Mr. Jones:

I would like to express my appreciation for your letter offering me the position of _____ in your _____ Department at a starting salary of \$4,695 per month.

I was very impressed with the personnel and facilities at your refinery in _____ and am writing to confirm my acceptance of the offer. If it is acceptable with you, I will report to work on January 15, 20XX.

Let me once again express my appreciation for your offer and my excitement about joining your engineering staff. I look forward to my association with ABC Corporation and feel my contributions will be in line with your goals of growth and continued success for the company.

Sincerely,

James Sharpe

“Cold” Cover Letter - To a Potential Employer

James Sharpe
18 Central Park Street
Anytown, New York 14788
(516) 555-1212

January 10, 20XX

Phillip Jones
President
ABC Corporation
1 Industry Plaza
Anytown, New York 12096

Dear Mr. Jones:

Please accept this letter as application for the Process Engineer position currently available with your company. My confidential resume is enclosed for your review and consideration.

My experience has afforded me exposure to numerous facets of process engineering, including troubleshooting, problem solving, tooling set-up, performance improvement projects, and quality assurance. I am confident that my expertise in these areas will prove to be an asset to ABC Company’s manufacturing operations.

I will contact you January 17, 20XX to schedule an interview at your convenience, during which I hope to learn more about your company, its plans and goals, and how I might contribute to its continued success.

Sincerely,

James Sharpe

enclosure

Referral Cover Letter

Gary S. Platt
2237 South Olby Road
Sacramento, California 97342

January 15, 20XX

David Myers
Vice President
Fulton Engineering Corporation
1254 Madison Street
Sacramento, California 97340

Dear Mr. Myers:

John Bird, the Director of Data Systems at Ottings Engineering Company, informed me that you are looking for someone to direct your new management information system.

I have enclosed my resume for your consideration. During the past 10 years, I have developed and supervised a variety of systems. I have worked at both the operational and managerial levels and know how to develop systems appropriate for different types of organizations.

I would appreciate an opportunity to visit with you and examine your operations. Perhaps I could provide you with a needs assessment prior to an interview. I will call you January 22, 20XX to make arrangements for a visit.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gary S. Platt

enclosure

Referral Approach Letter

John Albert
1099 Seventh Avenue
Akron, Ohio 44522

January 15, 20XX

Janet L. Cooper, Director
Architectural Design Office
RT Engineering Associates
621 West Grand Avenue
Akron, Ohio 44520

Dear Ms. Cooper:

John Sayres suggested that I write to you in regards to my interests in architectural drafting. He thought you would be a good person to give me some career advice.

I am interested in an architectural drafting position with a firm specializing in commercial construction. As a trained draftsman, I have six years of progressive experience in all facets of construction, from pouring concrete to developing plans for \$14 million in commercial and residential construction. I am particularly interested in improving construction design and building operations of shopping complexes.

Mr. Sayres mentioned you as one of the leading experts in this growing field. Would it be possible for us to meet briefly? Over the next few months, I will be conducting a job search. I am certain your counsel would assist me as I begin looking for new opportunities.

I will call your office January 22, 20XX to see if your schedule permits such a meeting.

Sincerely,

John Albert

Thank - You Letter
Post Job Interview

Stephanie Potter
2962 Forrest Drive
Denver, Colorado 82171

January 15, 20XX

Thomas F. Harris
Director, Personnel Department
Coastal Products Incorporated
7229 Lakewood Drive
Denver, Colorado 82170

Dear Mr. Harris:

Thank you again for the opportunity to interview for the marketing position. I appreciated your hospitality and enjoyed meeting you and members of your staff.

The interview convinced me of how compatible my background, interests, and skills are with the goals of Coastal Products Incorporated. My prior marketing experience with the Department of Commerce has prepared me to take a major role in developing both domestic and international market shares for Coastal Products Incorporated in the rapidly expanding Pacific Rim market.

For more information on the new product promotion program I mentioned, call David Garrett at the Department of Commerce. His number is (202) 725-0132. I talked to Dave this morning and mentioned your interest in this program.

I look forward to meeting you and your staff again.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Potter