



COVER LETTERS

Cover letters serve as the bridge between your resume and the specific job to which you are applying. Therefore, there is not a “one size fits all” cover letter. A cover letter is a reflection of your writing skills, so take the time to conduct a spell check and grammar check, and proofread, proofread and proofread again. The key to a great cover letter is to be specific to the organization and position – a generic cover letter will HURT you, not help you.

You Should Send a Cover Letter When:

- Applying through StritchBriefcase or another online database and employer has requested it
- Responding to a job posting via direct mail or email
- Sending a response to a referral from a friend or acquaintance

Guidelines

Your Cover Letter Should Be:

- Format, polished, and grammatically correct
- Precise, concise, cordial, and confident
- Written in the active voice
- Varied in sentence structure—don’t begin all sentences with “I”
- Printed on the same type of paper as your resume
- Targeted to the needs of the company and requirements of the position
- A way of connecting the job description with your resume and skills
- The font and formatting of your cover letter should match the font and formatting of your resume

Cover Letters Should be Addressed to a Specific Person

If you do not have a contact name:

- Investigate the company website and other online resources for contacts and addresses
- Call the company and request the name of the person responsible for hiring college graduates in your career area
- If all efforts fail, use a proper salutation such as “Dear Sir or Madam” or “Dear Hiring Manager”

Additional Tips

- Your cover letter should not be a repetition of the wording on your resume
- When sending a resume via email, you may follow the cover letter format to introduce your attached resume and pull it into the body of the email (do not include the forms format with addresses and the date)
- The subject line for cover letters sent via email should have the position/job title and your full name
- Use the term “Enclosure” or “Enclosures” only if you are sending hard copies of your documents

Content

The First Paragraph – “Why Them?”

- States WHY you are writing
 - Responding to an advertised opening
 - Inquiring about a possible opening
- States WHY you are applying to, or are interested in, this employer
 - Company’s training program
 - Company’s product or service
 - Demonstrate your company research
- Mention your contract/referral if you have one

The Second Paragraph – “Why You?”

- States WHAT qualifications you bring to the position
- Highlights two or three experiences or academic achievements that directly relate to the qualifications the employer is seeking
- Proves through examples of experiences and activities that you have key skills for the position – i.e., leadership, communication, problem-solving ability, and analytical skills
- May close with a summary sentence of your qualifications and a confident statement that you can make a contribution to the organization

The Third Paragraph – “Next Steps”

- States WHAT you WANT – an interview or an opportunity to further discuss your qualifications and any employment opportunities the employer may have
- May reference your enclosed or attached resume
- Thanks the person and indicates that you look forward to speaking to or meeting with him/her, but indicates flexibility as to time and place
- Optional: Can state that you call the contact person at a certain time/day to discuss scheduling a meeting or an interview

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Your Street Address
City, State, Zip

Date

[4 blank lines here]

Mr. Sean Ebo
Director of Sales
ABC Corporation
Street Name
City, State Zip

[2 blank lines here]

Dear Mr. Sorrell:

I recently spoke with Mr. Connors at the Spring Internship and Career Fair at Cardinal Stritch University regarding career opportunities within the pharmaceutical industry and he suggested I contact you. ABC Corporation's recent market expansion and use of the most current biotechnology in its products is particularly impressive. I am very interested in a Pharmaceutical Sales Representative position within your company and have enclosed my resume for your review.

My Science and Business education has exposed me to principles of business—marketing, accounting, finance, and management—while also establishing the strong science foundation necessary in the pharmaceutical industry. As a marketing intern last summer, I applied and developed these skills in a corporate environment. Through interaction with clients ranging from computer hardware business to local grocers, I fostered strong communication skills and the ability to work with diverse customers. Additionally, I am committed to achieving results. For example, my new approach to marketing an on-campus service program increased student participation by 25%. Given my goal-driven nature and desire to succeed, I am confident that I can make a positive contribution to your Sales Department.

I would like the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications and any sales opportunities within ABC Corporation. I will call you during the week of November 1st to see if we might schedule a convenient time to meet. I look forward to our conversation.

Sincerely,

[4 blank lines for signature]

Sue Mait

Enclosure

[Include if sending a hard copy of the letter and resume.]

Position Description

The Pharmaceutical Sales Representative is responsible for achieving sales goals and implementing company-approved programs within a (company assigned) geographically defined territory. This is accomplished by providing company-approved information and services to all classes of accounts such as physicians, retail pharmacies, hospitals, wholesalers, and managed care organization. The Sales Representative is also responsible for coordinating sales strategies with appropriate teammates to maximize sales in territories.

Start out with the name of your referral if applicable

Show that you've done your research to keep the reader's attention

Keep the letter short and to the point. Be direct but courteous in the closing.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

123 Street Name
City, State Zip

February 12, XXXX

Mr. Tom Cardinal
Cardinal Corporate Center
Milwaukee, WI

Address to a
particular person
if possible and
remember to use
a colon

Dear Mr. Cardinal:

I am a senior at Cardinal Stritch University studying History and English. I am writing to apply for the Marketing and Communications position at (insert company name) posted on Indeed.com. I've very excited about the field of education, and would welcome the opportunity to bring my strong communication skills, creativity, and marketing experience to your growing team.

(Company's name)'s commitment to early education for every child is of particular interest to me because of my passion for youth development. This past summer, I worked as a senior counselor in the Summer READing Program(SRP), which is dedicated to preventing summer learning loss for children in Milwaukee. I designed and taught fun, interactive classes to a group of 10 fifth graders, and planned and led local field trips and workshops daily with a junior counselor. Throughout the summer, I consistently strived to create math, science, and reading lessons and activities that were engaging and tailored to my students' needs.

Thank you for your consideration. I very much look forward to the opportunity to speak with you in person about my interest in the position.

Sincerely,
Sally Times

Keep letters
concise and factual.
Make sure your resume
and cover letter are
prepared with the
same font and size.