

# The Cover Letter



## WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is a business letter that accompanies your resume. It should complement and not duplicate your resume. The cover letter should highlight aspects of your background that are relevant to the organization and also the position for which you are applying.

## THE BASIC RULES OF WRITING A COVER LETTER:

### *Personalize Your Letter*



- ✓ Use a name or title in the inside address and salutation other than Dear Sir/Madam.
- ✓ Tailor each letter to fit the needs of the position by using words from the job description.
- ✓ Always thank the employer for his/her consideration and review.

### *Research The Company*



- ✓ Show an interest in the organization.
- ✓ Draw a parallel between the organization and your skills or interests - this establishes a reason for them to interview you.

### *Sell Yourself*



- ✓ Emphasize special achievements and specific skills.
- ✓ Do not simply repeat what's on the resume.
- ✓ Never accentuate negatives; if your job experience is limited, concentrate on your educational background or transferable skills.

### *Don't Forget Technical Aspects*



- ✓ Typographical, spelling or grammatical errors are unacceptable. **PROOFREAD!!**
- ✓ Use high quality bond paper, matching the same type used for the resume.

*Remember, your cover letter is the very first impression you offer an employer, and it should reflect your positive qualities. Your cover letter must **INSPIRE** the employer to read your resume!*

There are two types of cover letters:

1. Those that draw the reader's attention and entice him/her to read your resume.
2. Those that eliminate you from the running *before* your resume is read.

The cover letter serves as an introduction to your resume. A resume should never be sent without one. While your resume can remain the same for every company to which you apply, the cover letter should be created separately and individually for each position in which you express interest. Your career objective should be included in the cover letter - *not the resume*. By including it in the cover letter (which needs to be written separately anyway), you can tailor the objective to the advertisement to which you are responding or to the "hot tip" you received through your professional network.

Studies indicate that your cover letter has a life expectancy of *only 8 seconds!* Therefore, it must be brief but informative. The letter should have three recognizable parts:

1. **The Opening** explains why you are writing (i.e., "I am responding to...).
2. **The Main Body** should list two or three of your main accomplishments and give the reader a good reason to want to interview you.
3. **The Closing** thanks the person for their consideration, and expresses a desire for future communication.

Be sure your letter draws a connection between the needs of the current job opening and the skills you can bring to the position.

While the experience of the applicants in the samples on the next two pages is undoubtedly different from your own, you can adapt the format shown below to suit your individual career-search needs.

<h2>General Outline for a Cover Letter</h2>	Use complete title and address.	Applicant's Address Date of Letter
	If possible, address it to a particular person by name.	Employer's Name & Title Employer's Address
	Make the addressee want to read your resume.	Salutation:
	Be personable and enthusiastic.	<b>Opening Paragraph:</b> State why you are writing, name the position or type of work for which you are applying and mention how you heard of the opening or organization.
	Be brief and specific; your resume contains details.	<b>Middle Paragraph(s):</b> Explain why you are interested in this employer and specify your reasons for desiring this kind of work. If you had relevant work experience or related education, be sure to point it out, but do not reiterate you resume. Emphasize skills or abilities you have that relate to the job for which you are applying. Be sure to do this in a confident manner and remember that the reader will review your letter of application as an example of your writing skills.
	Top and bottom margins should be equal.	<b>Closing Paragraph:</b> You may refer the reader to your enclosed resume (which gives a summary of your qualifications) or whatever media you are using to illustrate your training, interests and experience. Have an appropriate closing to pave the way for the interview by indicating the action or steps you will take to initiate an interview date.
	Always sign letters.	Sincerely,
	If a resume or other enclosure is used, note this in letter.	<i>Signature</i> Your name typed
		enclosure

# Sample Cover Letter

## (Indented - Response to Ad Style)

28 Eagle Street  
Buffalo, NY 14290

Date

Mr. E.Q. Kimbal  
Human Resource Manager  
S.A. Insurance Company  
103 Brasted Street  
Buffalo, NY 14261

Dear Mr. Kimbal:

I have read with great interest your advertisement for a Manager Trainee in the Sunday, June 28, issue of The Buffalo News and am enclosing my resume for your review. I believe I have the necessary qualifications to warrant your serious interest and would, therefore, like to be considered for the opening.

I am a recent Daemen College graduate in Business Administration with a specialization in Management. Your advertisement includes the areas of inventory management and warehouse operations. Through my varied Cooperative Education placements during college, I have gained valuable experience in both of these areas.

My retail sales experience in college would also prove an asset to your company as customer service was a major part of my job. I was employed in a small store with a limited staff; therefore, it was necessary for me to have a thorough knowledge of all of its functions.

I would appreciate an interview with you to discuss my background in more detail. My home phone number is 673-2092. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Johnson

Enclosure

# Sample Cover Letter

## (Blocked - Cold Call Style)

28 Eagle Street  
Buffalo, NY 14290

Date

Ms. Susan Hastings  
Director of College Recruiting  
Midwest Mercantile Company  
312 Eisenhower Way  
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Ms. Hastings:

I read your company's description in NACE's *Job Choices in Business* and would like to inquire about employment opportunities in your management training program. I want to work in retail management and would like to relocate to the Chicago area after graduation.

I will receive my Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, with a specialization in Operations Management, this May. My internship with a large department store convinced me to pursue a career in retail. When I researched the top retailers in Chicago, Midwest Mercantile emerged as having a strong market position, an excellent training program, and a reputation for excellent customer service. In short, you provide the kind of retail environment I seek.

My resume is enclosed for your consideration. My education and experience match the qualifications you seek in your management trainees, but they don't tell the whole story. I know from customer and supervisor feedback that I have the interpersonal skills and motivation needed to build a successful career in retail management. My extensive experience gives me confidence in my career direction and in my abilities to perform competently.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how my education and experience would be consistent with your needs. I shall call you during the week of July 24 to discuss employment possibilities. In the meantime, if you need to contact me, my number is (716) 673-2092. Thank you for considering my request; I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Michael Johnson

Enclosure