

# Cover Letters

A cover letter is an important business letter that accompanies your resume when it is mailed to an employer. Its purpose is to introduce your resume and to give you an opportunity to exhibit your personality and enthusiasm for the job. An original cover letter should be created for each resume you send, and targeted to the specific position and organization.

Your cover letter should address four general areas: why you are writing; what your experience/education offers; why you are interested in the position and organization; and what you want to happen next.

## Common Guidelines



- ❖ **Paragraph and page length:** 3-4 paragraphs and 1 page.
- ❖ **Font type and size:** Arial, Times New Roman, Gill Sans (easy to read types), 11-12 pt size.
- ❖ **Your name and mailing address** should always be included along with the date.
- ❖ **Use a standard business letter format** for cover letters.
- ❖ **Margins:** ¼ inch to 1 inch on all sides. Keep sides symmetrical.
- ❖ **Write a unique cover letter** for each position you apply to.
- ❖ **Address your letter to a specific person;** avoid “To Whom It May Concern” and “Dear Sir/Madam”. If it is not possible to get a specific name be specific about department or role (ex. “Dear Human Resources Staff” or “Dear Search Coordinator”)
- ❖ **Proofread** each cover letter and have others review it for typos, grammar and clarity. Do NOT depend on Spell check or Grammar check on the computer!
- ❖ **Name the document** appropriately when saving to your computer (ex., Jane Doe State Farm Cover Letter 2015.doc).
- ❖ **Save your cover letters as .pdf** documents for easy electronic transmission.
- ❖ **Print** on white or off-white, high quality paper using a laser printer.
- ❖ Don't forget to **sign it**.

## Make it Unique — Tips for Great Cover Letters

- Tailor your letter to the requirements of the position and the employer's needs. Know your reader and his/her organization.
- Gather information about the company from recent press articles, magazines or directories. The Career Center website offers a number of company research tools: [www.stockton.edu/career](http://www.stockton.edu/career). Use this information in your cover letter to show you have done your research and are really interested in the company.
- Write each letter to a specific person. If it takes a few phone calls to obtain this information, make them.
- Grab the reader's attention in the first paragraph while mentioning the position in which you are interested.
- Avoid using the word “I” to start the letter or to start more than one paragraph in the entire letter.
- Do not be afraid to inject your own personality into the cover letter, but do so carefully. The letter should not be informal.
- Do not say anything negative about your employment situation or your life in general.
- Write each letter in your own words, not something you copied out of a book. Canned letters get canned responses or no response at all.

# Template for a sample cover letter

*Use complete title and address*

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip

Today's Date

*If possible, address it to a particular person by name*

Contact Name, Title  
Employer  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Salutation:

*Make the addressee want to read your resume – engage his/her curiosity; be personable and enthusiastic*

**Opening Paragraph:** 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. Mention any connections (i.e. person who referred you). It is helpful to include a transitional sentence to set the tone for your letter.

*Be brief and specific; your resume contains the details*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph:** Address the specific needs of the employer and show how you can fill those needs. Do NOT simply list or repeat items on your resume. Highlight 2-3 relevant skills, experiences or special accomplishments. Give examples and show transferable skills – it is up to you to show how what you have done connects to what the employer seeks. Be sure to do this in a confident manner and remember that the reader will view your letter of application as an example of your writing skills.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph:** This optional paragraph is a good place to highlight additional skills, a specific interest in the company, or educational experiences.

*Top and bottom margins should be equal*

**Closing Paragraph:** The closing paragraph calls for action. You should mention your intention to follow up with the employer and let the reader know that you want to interview for the position. Close by thanking the reader for considering your application.

*Always sign letters if sending via postal mail*

Sincerely,

*Your Signature*

Your Typed Name

Enclosure

## Invited Style in Block Format\*

**Heather Barker**  
702 Oaktree Terrace  
Bridgewater, NJ 08807  
609-630-9999

September 1, 2015

Mr. John Janson  
Human Resources Department  
Miller Multiplex Corporation  
8 Sumner Court  
Haddonfield, NJ 08000

Dear Mr. Janson,

As I read your ad in the *Gazette* for an accountant, I knew immediately that I could offer exactly the solid experience and skills you describe.

While earning my bachelor's degree in accounting at Stockton University, I worked in the financial accounting field full-time. In my present position, I not only have further developed my management and technical skills, but greatly reduced the operating costs and time spent recording routine financial accounting services.

I am convinced that I am particularly well suited to meet the challenges of your position. Within two weeks I will contact you to confirm that you have received my application material. At that time, I would welcome the opportunity to schedule a personal interview to further discuss my potential fit with Miller Multiplex Corporation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Very truly yours,

Heather Barker  
[barker@yahoo.com](mailto:barker@yahoo.com)

Enclosure

***\*The writer is responding to a classified ad in a specific publication. Note how she confidently states that she possesses the necessary skills, and then supports the statement with facts.***

## Referral Letter in Block Format\*

1245 Panhandle Lane, Apt. #3  
Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08111

February 12, 2015

Mr. Steven Jones, Manager  
XYZ Company  
2459 Palm Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Dear Mr. Jones,

A mutual business associate, Sally Smith, mentioned you had an opening in your Public Relations Department and suggested that I forward my resume to you. Ms. Smith also said you were looking for someone with excellent writing skills, public speaking experience and good interpersonal skills.

As a communications major, I have written numerous term papers over the past four years and have consistently received excellent grades and comments on my writing style. I am also the feature editor of my college newspaper. In terms of public speaking experience, as a campaign manager for two different student government candidates, I have spoken in front of groups ranging from five to fifty people. Additionally, I have worked as a volunteer organizing fundraisers for my college's alumni association.

I will be in your area during our Spring Break, March 10-14, and would like to meet with you that week to discuss how I can serve your company in increasing sales and market share. I will call next Thursday to schedule a convenient day and time for us to get together.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

David Litton

Enclosure

***\* Note that the writer has used the name of referring person in the first line to grab the reader's attention.***

***The second paragraph gives the reader a brief account of experience not typically listed in a resume. This information is presented in the writer's own unique style and not as statistical information.***

## Prospecting Letter in Modified Block Format\*

859 Baldwin Avenue  
Vineland, New Jersey 08360  
May 11, 2015

Mr. Timothy Mellon  
Director of College Recruiting  
Swanky Hotels, Inc  
4500 20<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 00731

Dear Mr. Mellon,

After reading your company's description in *Job Choices Business* magazine, I was prompted to inquire about employment opportunities in your management training program. I believe my strong work ethic, solid hospitality experience and passion for exceptional customer service would make me an excellent fit with your company.

My interest in hospitality began in high school while working as a valet hiker at a boutique hotel and continued to develop through a variety of catering and hotel positions during college. While maintaining a 3.4 GPA I committed myself to learning all aspects of the industry by working 30 hours a week in positions both front and back of house including Front Desk Supervisor and Catering Assistant. Additionally, while interning at a Four Diamond hotel in Center City Philadelphia I had the opportunity to develop a social media strategy for the hotel and present it to the Executive Team.

My resume is enclosed for your consideration. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my background with you in person and would travel to Manhattan at my own expense to do so. I will call you at the end of next week to confirm an appropriate time and date. Thank you very much for considering my request.

Sincerely

Craig S. Watson

*\* The writer indicates his interest in a job and reveals the source of his information about the company. He has outlined his strongest qualifications and used appropriate lingo related to the field throughout the letter.*

**For assistance with writing cover letters, set up an appointment with  
a counselor – [Stockton.edu/Career](http://Stockton.edu/Career) Appointment**