

the cover letter

Your cover letter has a life expectancy of about eight seconds, so it must be brief, yet informative.

Formulating the Cover Letter from *EEO Trust* bimonthly magazine

There are two types of cover letters — those that draw the reader in and entice him or her to read your resumé and those that eliminate you from the running before it even gets read.

The cover letter serves as the introduction to your resumé; your resume should always be accompanied by a cover letter. Revise the cover letter for each position for which you express interest. Be sure to include your career objective in the cover letter, and tailor it to the advertisement to which you are responding or to the advice you received through your professional network.

Your Name	
Mailing Address City, State Zip Code	Telephone Number(s) E-mail Address
Date of Letter	
Employer's Name and Title Company Employer's Mailing Address City, State Zip Code	
Salutation:	
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. Explain why you are interested in working for this employer.	
Middle Paragraph(s): Specify your reasons for desiring this type of work. If you have had relevant work experience or related education, be sure to point it out, but do not reiterate your entire resumé. 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. Remember also that the reader will view your letter of application as an example of your writing skills. This paragraph(s) is designed to entice the reader to look beyond the letter to your resumé.	
Closing Paragraph: You may refer the reader to your enclosed resumé (which gives a summary of your qualifications) or whatever media you're 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. (For example, I can be reached at the phone number above to arrange an interview or I will contact you soon.)	
Sincerely,	
(Signature)	
Applicant's Name, typed	
Enclosure	

Studies indicate that your cover letter has a life expectancy of about eight seconds, so it must be brief, yet informative. The letter should have three recognizable parts: the opening, which explains why you are writing ("I'm responding to your advertisement ..."); the main body, which demonstrates competencies you have achieved through two or three of your major accomplishments and gives the reader good reason to interview you; and the closing, which 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 job.

While the experience of the applicants in the samples on the next pages is undoubtedly different from your own, you can adapt the format shown here to suit your individual career search needs. Notice they all share the following attributes:

- They are written in a business letter format and have a neat, professional look.
- The first paragraph of each letter explains the purpose and generates interest, frequently by using a name.
- The body of each letter focuses on what the writer can offer and not what the writer wants.
- The style of the letter is conversational but still businesslike. They do not use a lot of jargon or cumbersome sentences.

Sample Cover Letters

General Outline for a Cover Letter

- Use complete title and address.
- If possible, address it to a particular person by name.
- Be careful to use Mr., Ms. or Dr. If a name is not available, address it to an appropriate title within the organization, such as Human Resources Manager, Hiring Manager or Department Manager. Do not address the letter Dear Sir or To Whom it May Concern.
- Make the addressee want to read your resumé. Be personable and be enthusiastic.
- All margins should be equal.
- Always sign letters above your typed name.
- If a resumé or other enclosure is included, note in letter.

Letter for entry-level position/first-time job seeker

Amy Schoenfeld

15 Avalon Drive
Brooklyn, NY 55555
August 15, 2011

555-555-5555
amyschoenf@drake.edu

Ms. Joan Sampson
Vice President
ABC, Inc.
2301 Walnut Grove Lane
St. Louis, MO 27555

Dear Ms. Sampson:

I am seeking a position in journalism with a high quality publisher where I can utilize my writing skills. In speaking with Sue Anderson, she suggested I contact you directly to learn more about editing positions with ABC, Inc.

As you will note from the enclosed resumé, I have majored in magazines in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Drake University. As an editor of *Drake Magazine*, I have extensive editorial, proofreading, layout and design experience. My education and extracurricular activities have taught me the importance of teamwork in meeting critical production deadlines. I take pride in being organized, handle pressure well, enjoy collaborating with a variety of people, and have great enthusiasm for my work and studies.

I would like to learn more about entry-level editing positions at ABC, Inc. I will follow up with you next week to discuss my qualifications or to answer any questions you might have. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Amy Schoenfeld

Amy Schoenfeld
Enclosure

Post-event letter

Peter Murphy

453 Mulholland Drive
Ankeny, IA 50023
August 19, 2011

555-867-5309
PeterM@drake.edu

Mr. Bob Zander
Director of Human Resources
The Trane Company
546 80th St.
Milwaukee, WI 55050

Dear Mr. Zander:

You may recall that we met last week at the Meet the Employers networking event, and had an interesting conversation about your role at The Trane Company. I appreciated the time you spent with me and am writing to inquire about scheduling a time for us to continue our discussion. I hope you may be able to offer advice on matters such as career opportunities and trends in the sector, conducting an effective job search and how best to uncover job leads.

As I explained, my background in marketing and graphic design has helped me develop strong collaborative organizational and planning skills as well as a creative approach to problem solving.

I am focusing on increasing my knowledge and understanding of the HR sector. I will contact you next week to arrange a convenient time to set up a meeting that should only take 15–20 minutes.

Sincerely,

Peter Murphy

Peter Murphy
Enclosure

Letter for experienced job seeker

Cory Lawrence

5 Clove Road
Staten Island, NY 55555
March 27, 2011

555-555-5050
CoryL@drake.edu

Richard Patterson
Section Manager
Webber Corporation
16399 W. Bernardo Drive
San Diego, CA 92717

Dear Mr. Patterson:

I would like to apply for the position of marketing representative at your San Diego facility as advertised in the Sunday, March 24 issue of the *San Diego Journal*.

At XYZ Company, we use a number of your products, and as a laboratory scientist here, I have become very familiar with their design, precision and reliability. Your upcoming project of applying microcomputers in automatic control systems interests me a great deal and, as the enclosed resumé states, fits well with my background.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss how my education and experience are consistent with your needs. Please take the time to review my qualifications, and I will contact you within two weeks to talk about the possibility of arranging an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cory Lawrence

Cory Lawrence
Enclosure

Networking letter

Bucky Fellini

453 Mulholland Drive
Ankeny, IA 50023
August 19, 2011

555-867-5309
BuckyF@drake.edu

Ms. Aimee Leader
Vice President of Human Resources
WABCO Intl.
3859 Prospect Lane
Milwaukee, WI 90210

Dear Ms. Leader:

I was given your name by a mutual acquaintance of ours, Jane Contact, who suggested that I contact you for assistance with my career aspirations. I am currently exploring the possibility of moving into the field of human resources management, and Jane thought that you might be able to offer some guidance and direction.

I am seeking the advice of human resource professionals regarding the best steps to enter the field. I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss your experience. I am hoping that you may be able to offer advice on matters such as career opportunities and trends in the sector, conducting an effective job search, and how best to uncover job leads.

My background is currently in marketing and graphic design, which has helped me develop strong collaborative organizational and planning skills as well as a creative approach to problem solving.

I am focusing on increasing my knowledge and understanding of the HR sector. I will contact you next week to arrange a convenient time to set up a meeting that should only take 15–20 minutes.

Sincerely,

Bucky Fellini

Bucky Fellini
Enclosure



Professional & Career Development Services

2507 University Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50311-4505 T 515-271-3721 or toll-free 1-800-44-DRAKE (37253), x3721 E pcds@drake.edu W www.drake.edu/career