

Cover Letter Writing

A cover letter is a marketing tool intended to generate interest in you and get the reader excited about reviewing your accompanying resume. The cover letter should succinctly articulate your interest and enthusiasm for both the company and specific position, and demonstrates how your unique background, skills and experiences make you an excellent fit for both the position and organization to which you are applying.

General Tips

- Make connections between what is on your resume and the position requirements; don't just repeat what's on your resume.
 - Describe specific accomplishments, experiences and skills that demonstrate how you fit the position. Provide examples to support claims; doing so strengthens your candidacy.
 - Cite examples from the most relevant areas of your background, including your internship or employment experience, leadership roles, extra-curricular activities and coursework.
- Prepare a unique letter for each position.
 - Nothing looks worse than a generic cover letter; make sure your cover letter highlights skill sets and credentials consistent with those of the job posting.
 - Customize the employer's information on each individual letter; specify why you are interested in working in this position at this company.
- Address each cover letter to the appropriate person.
 - Use "Dear Mr. or Ms. Last Name". Do not use phrases such as "To whom it may concern" or "Dear Sir or Madam". If the name is unisex (e.g., Pat Brown), use "Dear First & Last Name".
 - Call the Human Resources office or Hiring Manager of each organization to find out who you should be addressing your letter to.
 - If you cannot identify the appropriate person, address your cover letter to "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Selection Committee".
- Keep a copy of every letter you submit.
 - Designate a folder on your computer to save each cover letter you send out. Use the dates on each cover letter as a reference.
 - If you do not hear from the employer within two weeks, follow up and ask them about the status of your application.
- Make it perfect.
 - Typographical errors, misspellings and poor word choice will earn your cover letter and resume a one-way ticket to the "no pile".
 - Have someone proofread your letter before sending it out.
- Enthusiasm Sells.
 - Employers want candidates who want to work for them. Show them that you've researched their organization and make a convincing case for why you want to work for them.
 - Be professional and courteous, but let your personality come through.

Formatting Tips

- Use 8½" X 11" quality bond paper – the same kind you used for your resume.
- Keep it to one page, single spaced.
- Use 10-12 point font and choose the same style you chose for your resume.
- Remember to sign your name at the bottom of each hard copy letter you submit.
- Use a Block Style Format, and align names, dates and paragraphs along the left-hand margin.
- Use 1" margins all around the page.

Cover Letter Outline

Your Street Address
City, ST Zip

Today's Date

Mr./Ms. First and Last Name of Contact
Title of Employer
Company/Organization
Street Address
City, ST Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name of Contact:

Your opening paragraph tells **why you are writing** and notes where you learned about the position or if someone referred you. When referring to the position, use the title used by the employer. If someone referred you and no specific title is known, be as specific as possible about the kind of position for which you are applying. Do some research on the organization so that you can state your genuine interest in this particular employer and why it is a good fit for you, not how it will help you.

Your middle paragraph(s) should **highlight** examples that demonstrate your relevant experience, background, and/or coursework that will show the reader why she/he should consider you as a candidate. Be sure to connect your experiences and/or education to the position description. By using examples, show the employer that you have the necessary experience they seek.

You could include another paragraph detailing additional **experience** that will demonstrate or connect your background with the position. For a concluding sentence, summarize the skills and personal traits that you would bring to the job for which you are applying. Also, remember that the reader will view your letter as an example of your writing skills.

In your closing paragraph, **reiterate your interest in the position, thank the employer for his/her consideration, provide your contact information, and indicate the follow-up action.** State what you want the recipient of the letter to do next (such as contacting you to further discuss the available position) or what you will do next (such as calling to follow-up on the status of your application). Only say you are going to follow up if you have the contact information to do so.

Sincerely,

Sign your name (note: if sending electronically no need to include signature)

Your name (typed)
Enclosure

When writing a cover letter, you want to market your experiences, background and skill set *to the specific position to which you're applying*. Depending on the position, you may pull from different areas of your academic, work, extracurricular, and athletic experiences that better target the skill sets and credentials most pertinent to the specific job or internship to which you're applying. Below is a sample internship description for a position at Ticketmaster. Notice how Wesley, the student whose cover letter appears on the following page, draws a clear link between the skills/experiences detailed in the job description and his own academic background, skill set and campus involvement. In doing so, Wesley makes a clear case for his candidacy.

Sample Job Description

Job Title Marketing/Promotions Intern
Company Ticketmaster
Industry Arts & Entertainment – Other, Retail/Merchandising
Job Function Marketing
Description As a *marketing* intern for Ticketmaster, you can expect to learn *sales and marketing practices* of the ticketing industry in the world of entertainment. The internship will allow you to enhance your *writing, presentation* and *research skills* as well as learn how to *develop and maintain client relationships*. By the completion of the internship you should know how to determine via *research* what *marketing techniques* to apply to various projects, online placement, discounting, promotions and more. This internship will give you insight and vast general knowledge of *marketing* in live entertainment ticketing; concerts, sports, arts and family events.

Look for keywords – descriptive action verbs and adjectives defining the main responsibilities and qualifications of the position – in the job description and try to use them in the body of your cover letter.

Notice the skill sets that the position highlights. Key terms are bolded and italicized for emphasis.

Position Responsibilities:

- Track event data and present findings.
- Develop recap materials at the conclusion of a promotion.
- Support product-related initiatives.
- Contribute to website content and the creation of custom webpages.
- Monitor that the Ticketmaster brand is properly represented in client and promotional partners' advertisements.
- Assist with customized *marketing/promotional* presentations.
- Run quality assurance tests.

Qualifications:

- Student pursuing a BA/BS degree in related area from an accredited institution.
- Must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.
- Excellent *organizational, verbal and written communication skills* are essential.
- *Creativity* and strong attention to detail required.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Word/Excel/Power Point and the Internet required.
- Must be able to work in a *team environment* and meet deadlines.

Additional Information:

- Scheduling office hours is negotiable per applicant.
- Length of internship: minimum 15 hours per week for 10 weeks.

Contact Rosalyn Leiva – East Regional Recruiter
 Alumnus: No

NOTE: Print out the job description for the position you're applying to, then identify and highlight keywords from the posting. This will help you better "target" your cover letter.

Sample Cover Letter – HireU

Ms. Rosalyn Leiva
East Regional Recruiter
Ticketmaster

First Paragraph – Cite the position you’re applying to and reference where you found out about the opportunity (corporate website, personal referral, etc.). Try to display your enthusiasm for the position and/or line of work by stating WHY you want to work for the particular organization.

Dear Ms. Leiva:

I am writing to apply for the Marketing/Promotions Intern position at Ticketmaster, which I learned about through the Becker Career Center at Union College. After reviewing the position description and researching Ticketmaster, I am confident that my skills and experience make me an excellent candidate.

Highlight skills and pieces of your background consistent with the job posting. Wes does a good job of linking his own skill set with the needs of the specific position.

As a sophomore at Union College, I have undertaken a number of courses and extra-curricular engagements that prepared me for this internship. The study of economics has helped develop my ***research, analytical and creative thinking skills***, as it has allowed me to contemplate the relationships between human behavior and a variety of environmental and cultural factors. As part of my sophomore research project, I am currently ***researching*** how companies effectively utilize branding strategies and catchy logos to increase their client base and better capture their target markets. This on-going ***analysis*** of corporate markets and the knowledge I am gaining regarding effective ***marketing*** strategies will directly benefit the Marketing/Promotions department.

Body Paragraphs – Notice how Wesley specifically highlights some of the broader skill sets outlined in the job description, uses keywords that are consistent with the job posting and cites examples to support his statements.

I have complemented my academic background with strong extra-curricular involvement. As Publicity and Promotions Co-Chair for U-Program, I oversaw and implemented a ***marketing plan*** for campus concerts, comedic performances and novelty acts. This required ***strong teamwork, organizational and interpersonal abilities*** as I interfaced with campus administrators, student organizations and other U-Program members in executing the marketing plan.

Notice how Wes uses this paragraph to highlight his campus leadership experiences.

I will be a strong asset to the Marketing/Promotions team at Ticketmaster and would greatly appreciate the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications with you. I can be reached at 518-333-6565 or MantootW@union.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Closing Paragraph – Thank the employer for their time and reiterate your interest in the position.

Wesley Mantooth

NOTE: All keywords on this cover letter are bolded and italicized for emphasis. Refrain from doing so on your own cover letter or resume.