Cover Letters

What is a cover letter?
A cover letter is your opportunity to connect with the employer, highlight your transferable skills, and give the reader a sense of who you are as an applicant. In essence, it’s a marketing piece that convinces the employer to offer you an interview, and goes beyond your qualifications, proving that you understand the company, the position, and how you can contribute. A cover letter accompanies the resume, communicates to the employer which position (or type of position) you are seeking and highlights the aspects of your experience and skills that are most relevant to the specific employers’ needs.

How do I get ready to write?
• Do your research on the organization/employer and the job posting itself
• Write down a list of things about the employer and position that are attractive to you
• Examine the qualifications/duties, and highlight those you think are the most important to be successful in the position.

What should I generally include in each section of the letter when I write?

First Paragraph – Make the introduction and hook the reader
• Position you’re applying for
• If you have a connection to the company (mutual acquaintance, someone who referred you, current employee)
• Why you’re interested in the company/organization (show off some research you did!)

Second Paragraph – Make the Case
• Prove that you’re a good candidate for the job. Use your list of job qualification and/or duties, and tell them how you’re qualified to do that work. (Watch out for starting too many sentences with “I”)
• Statements should use concrete examples, and connect to job duties or desired qualifications
• When possible talk about results, numbers, and concrete outcomes to the experience you have

Third Paragraph (If needed)
• If you have a lot of relevant experience in your first and second paragraph, you may want to talk a bit here about your education and skills you’ve developed through that. If you don’t have as much experience, your second paragraph will likely have more of your training background, and you won’t need a third paragraph

Closing Paragraph
• Make a connection again to the job or employer. This might include why you’re interested in that specific job title, the contribution you feel you can make to the organization, or something about the company that is particularly attractive to you (SHOW YOUR RESEARCH)
• Unless told not to follow up or call, include a timeframe for when you will touch base (“I will follow up within two weeks, and look forward to learning more about your hiring timeline”)
• Motivate the reader to take action (“please let me know if you need any additional information from me”), reiterate your interest and contact info and thank them for their time.

Keep in Mind...
• Cover letters can be sent as an attachment, uploaded via online submission form, or sent in the body of an email (when emailing an application, use an effective subject line such as “Marketing Intern Application: Your Name”)
• If you want to get started, but don’t have a specific position or employer in mind, FIND ONE. Cover letters take practice, so find a job description similar to what you want, and write to that description, even if it’s not the exact job you’re applying for. Then you can tailor to the job you do want more easily.

The Basics
• It is written in a professional, active tone, free of spelling and grammatical errors and has been proofread
• The letter connects the key skills from the job description and functional responsibilities of the role to specific examples explaining how your experience matches those sought-after skills
• Letter is about 3-4 paragraphs in length and highlights your top experiences and qualifications (not everything you’ve ever done!)
• The content of the letter conveys your knowledge of the organization, enthusiasm for the position, and does not appear generic
• It stresses what you can DO for the employer, not what the employer/position can do for you

Enhancements
• The letter is addressed to the correct contact person (research employer via LinkedIn/Google/Calling)
• Tone appropriately matches that of the employer: Look at how they talk about themselves on their website or in job description, and write to fit (some companies use very casual language, others very formal)
• Cover letter and resume when placed side-by-side appear branded with the same formatting
• Closing of letter identifies how and when you plan to follow-up to inquire about next steps
Dear Ms. Savage,

Entering my junior year in college I am becoming increasingly interested in marketing and the impact social media can have in driving results for businesses. I found your Social Media Internship on the Entercom website, and would like to enthusiastically request consideration for this opportunity. As a Rochester native, I grew up listening to 98PXY in the afternoon, and have more recently become an active listener of The Buzz. I have both an academic and practical background in social media management and engagement, and look forward to applying this within an entertainment organization.

At the University of Rochester I am majoring in English in the Language, Media and Communications track. Within this I have taken several marketing courses, as well as Social Uses of Media and Broadcasting in the Digital Age. Combined, these courses have given me an understanding of how important social media presence can be to the brand of an organization, particularly within media and broadcasting.

I have put this knowledge into action as the Social Media and Marketing manager for Delta Gamma Sorority this past year. In this position I manage all print and online marketing for events, maintain an online blog, and update our Facebook page and Twitter feed. In this role I frequently scour the internet for interesting topics and articles that appeal to our membership, connect with other organizations for cross-member marketing, and create a fun, interactive message for our sisterhood. During my tenure in this position we saw a 200% increase Facebook page likes, 43 event and update shares, and were recognized by the Student Association with a “Social Media Powerhouse” award. This experience has been a great introduction to social media management, and I’m looking forward to now applying this in a corporate setting.

Per your internship description, I am able to receive credit for your internship through the English Department at UR, am available for 15 hours per week on weekdays and weekends. I’m particularly interested in an internship at Entercom due to the wide range of radio stations and listener types you engage with, and believe I can both contribute to and learn from those I would be shadowing and working with. Please let me know if I can provide you with any additional information beyond my attached resume, and I will follow up early next week to ask if there are any additional steps I should take. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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