

COVER LETTERS

A well written cover letter should always accompany your resume or application. Its purpose is to introduce you and expand on the experience in your resume. A good cover letter should:

- Include specific information about why you want to work for the employer
- Exemplify clear and concise writing skills
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the position
- Align your experience with the desired qualifications of the employer

Cover Letters for Job or Internship Listings

1. Know the employer

Research the employer's organization to see how your experience, skills, and abilities meet its needs. In your cover letter, show why you are a good fit. Send the letter to a specific person whenever possible; otherwise, use "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Members of the Selection Committee."

2. Analyze the job description

Review the job responsibilities and qualifications carefully and design your cover letter to match these as much as possible. Sometimes job listings are vague. In these cases, draw from your experience of similar jobs to infer what skills and abilities might be required or research similar positions online.

3. Analyze your background

Think about your background in relation to the job responsibilities and qualifications. Ask yourself, "What have I done that is similar to what this job entails?" Consider courses taken, classroom projects, work experience, summer jobs, internships, volunteer experience, extracurricular involvement, and travel.

Be sure to indicate in the first paragraph what position you're seeking. If a specific person recommended you for or alerted you about the position, include their name and title up front. For example "Jason Ryner, your Marketing Manager, recommended that I apply for this position."

Prospecting Letters

If you are inquiring about possible openings, you are sending an Inquiry or Prospecting Letter. Address your letter to a specific individual, usually the person who supervises the functional area where you'd like to work. Be as specific as possible about the type of position that interests you. Ideally, your research will reveal the job titles used by this employer. If not, use generic job titles commonly understood in the field.

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST



STOP! Don't submit your cover letter until you have completed the following:

- Write an original targeted cover letter for each employer and position
- State in the first sentence why you are writing
- Show that your career goals are aligned with both the position and the organization
- Make your points succinctly; every point should support your readiness to contribute
- Proofread for typos and accuracy of contact information. Have another set of eyes review it too
- Run Spell Check before sending your final copy, but remember that it does not catch everything
- Follow up with the employer if you hear nothing after 2-3 weeks. Inquire if any further information is needed and reiterate your interest

HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER THAT GOES NOWHERE

- Make your introduction long winded and don't include your job objective to cause confusion about what you're applying for
- Don't proofread your letter or use Spell Check. This is very useful for those who claim to be "detail oriented"
- Ramble on about your experiences without explaining why they are relevant. Don't mention details that will let the employer know that you understand what their company does or what the job entails
- Write more than one page, forcing employers to hunt for your qualifications
- Explain what the employer can do for you, instead of what you can do for them
- Don't encourage the employer to contact you, leave out contact information, and don't sign your name at the end of the letter
- Send the same generic cover letter to all employers

Preparing for Your Search

Internships

Your Job or Internship Search

Resume & Letter Writing

Successful Interviewing

Internship & Job Offers

COVER LETTER

suggested content & layout

The following is intended as a guide. Cover letters should be unique and original.

Your street address
City, State Zip Code
Email address
(Area Code) Phone Number

Month Date, Year

Mr./Ms./Dr. First and Last Name of Person
Position or Title
Employer Organization's Name
Employer Street Address/P.O. Box
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name of Addressee:

Tell the reader why you are writing (i.e., regarding the position that interests you; if appropriate, indicate how you learned of the position and/or organization). Make a general statement about being a good candidate for the job.

Explain why you have targeted this particular organization: demonstrate your knowledge of its products, services and operations (this means you must research the potential employer). Stress what you have to offer, not what you want from, the employer. Identify those parts of your experience (paid or non-paid) that will interest this employer. Students and recent graduates can draw attention to relevant course work, special projects and campus activities. In some cases, you will add detail to items included in your resume. Refer the reader to your enclosed resume for additional information.

Demonstrate your understanding of the duties of the position that you are applying for, and state how your unique qualifications fit the position. Request an interview appointment, or tell the reader that you will contact him/her soon in order to see if you can schedule a mutually convenient appointment. If the employer is some distance away, indicate when you would be available for an interview. (For example, if you will be traveling to the employer's location during an academic holiday, indicate the days you will be in that area.) Thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sign Your Name Here

Type your name

The simplest way to lay out your cover letter is to align all text to the left. Not only is it simple, but it looks professional and polished.

COVER LETTER

for an existing opening

2121 Elm Street
Berkeley, CA 94541
maryjones@berkeley.edu
December 28, 2010

Ms. Susan Merrill
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Dispute Analysis & Corporate Recovery Group
100 Palm Street
Los Angeles, CA 90000

Dear Ms. Merrill:

As a Business Administration major at UC Berkeley with a strong background in economics, accounting, and finance, I am very excited to hear of a staff consultant position with PricewaterhouseCoopers. While I am certainly impressed by the far reach of PwC's work, the company's commitment to sustainable corporate responsibility and women's professional development are particular draws for me. I believe the qualities, skills and experience you seek are well matched by my track record:

Your Needs

Accounting Experience

Finance Experience

Strong Communication Skills

Solid Accounting and Finance Education

Professional Accomplishments

My Qualifications

- Currently working with the Investment Management Group at Wells Fargo.

- Prepared income tax returns for retail businesses and low income households.

- Led team in preparing income tax returns by determining clients' specialized needs.
- Interact constantly with Wells Fargo managers and vendors.

- Coursework in intermediate financial accounting, auditing, economics, introductory finance, and investments.
- Graduating Business Administration Major with 3.5 GPA.

- Independently created databases to facilitate expense tracking for IMG Finance and Marketing.

I am eager to pursue this opportunity and would be very interested in setting up an interview to discuss further how I would be a strong contributor at PricewaterhouseCoopers. I can be contacted at (510) 333-1111. I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Mary Jones

Mary Jones

Although it's more assertive to indicate that you will call, it's best to wait for a call if the employer specifically states "no calls" in their listing.

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COVER LETTER

prospecting for a position

333 College Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94765
susantdavis@berkeley.edu
(555) 555-7777

December 1, 2010

Mr. Earl Jones
Goodworks Agency
234 E Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 94567

Dear Mr. Jones:

I learned about Goodworks in the process of researching nonprofits online. I have been seeking an organization whose mission matches my desire to help low-income clients with practical matters and emotional support, and was inspired by Goodworks' range of services and successful track record. I am writing to see whether you would be interested in hiring an intern this summer.

I am a junior at UC Berkeley, pursuing my BA in Sociology and a Spanish Minor, and considering an eventual career in social work or nonprofit management. Since August, I have been conducting HIV test counseling sessions as a volunteer at the Berkeley Free Clinic. It has been rewarding working with people from diverse backgrounds, many of whom are struggling to meet basic life needs, and to use my Spanish speaking skills. I would love to apply and further develop my counseling skills while making a positive contribution at Goodworks.

I will be available to work up to 20 hours a week this coming summer and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the possibility of interning there. I will follow up on this letter in a week to see if we can set up a time. Thank you very much for your attention.

Sincerely,

Susan T. Davis

Susan T. Davis

Since you don't have a mutual contact, you have to find another way to form a bond with the reader. Establish that you are interested specifically in this organization and explain why you are targeting them.

Keep the letter short and to the point. The reader is probably very busy, and the letter is just to get her attention. Be assertive in the closing.

COVER LETTER

to a mutual acquaintance

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For a unified look, consider using the same presentation style for your cover letter contact information that you used on your resume. Logan centered all of his contact information here as well as at the top of his resume.

Logan Silva
555 Rodeo Drive
Berkeley, CA 94532
logans@berkeley.edu
(510) 555-8765

December 17, 2010

Ms. Mary Smith
Striped Bass, Inc.
1010 Avenue of the Stars, Ste. 900
Los Angeles, CA 90000

Begin with the name of your mutual acquaintance—this creates an immediate connection.

Dear Ms. Smith:

Jane Jones, a friend and Senior Financial Analyst at Striped Bass, suggested that I forward my resume to you. Based on a review of your website and my conversations with Jane about my educational training, work experience, and professional interests, I believe I would fit right in at Striped Bass. I am highly motivated to build a successful career in finance and hope to contribute to the team at Striped Bass as a Financial Analyst.

My fascination with finance has grown steadily during my business school studies, driven mostly by my desire to understand how business decisions are made. Beginning with my first finance class and continuing with more in-depth study of corporate finance and managerial accounting, I have come to see how financial data can be used to make business decisions, whether in launching a new product or acquiring a new company. I have also learned how important it is to keep a big-picture perspective during the decision-making process. This duality appeals to me tremendously as it follows directly from what I have been studying: business with its detailed focus on the company, and economics with its broad perspective on industry and the marketplace. Working as a Financial Analyst with Striped Bass would be a natural extension of the academic foundation I have gained.

Draw attention to relevant skills and demonstrate when and how you used them.

My work experiences also reflect my desire to become involved with challenging projects such as those offered by your organization. The opportunity at Striped Bass to participate in executing senior staff's complex projects as well as eventually leading my own is very appealing to me. At Boston Scientific, I created numerous forecast and inventory reports for the Global Supply Chain Management team. This required significant attention to detail and analytical work. I further developed my communication and financial skills by working on numerous cost efficiency projects for the Microbiology department, including the creation of a corporate-wide standing order matrix.

I would build upon these skills and experiences at Striped Bass and am confident that I would do outstanding work as a Financial Analyst. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, as I would like to meet with you at your convenience to discuss the possibility of full-time employment.

Sincerely,

Logan Silva

Logan Silva