

COVER LETTER GUIDE

Purpose

The purpose of a cover letter is to give a recruiter or hiring manager a more detailed view of your accomplishments and a sense of what you'll bring to the table if you are hired. For this reason, learning how to write a cover letter is a critical skill for all job seekers. Some recruiters may not read these cover documents, but you have no way of knowing which ones will and which ones won't. Also, many recruiters will use cover letters as a way to differentiate between candidates with similar credentials, making it another reason it's a good idea to include one with every resume you send out.

KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL COVER LETTERS

Your First & Last Name, Your Contact Information
(The heading should match your current resume)

Today's date

Company Name

Dear Person's First & Last Name or Dear Hiring Manager,

Introduction: Begin your cover letter with a 'hook' - a sentence that will immediately grab the reader's attention. Some methods for a strong introduction include: telling a relevant story/anecdote, making a bold/interesting statement about yourself, starting off with a question that makes the reader think, mentioning an employee that recommended you apply, and more. Specify what position you're interested in, but that is not the main point of this section. Avoid typical openings like: "I am writing to respond to this internship/full time job/open position..." Feel free to specify what position you're interested in, but know that is not the main point of this section.

Body: Do not copy your resume's content here. This is where you tell your story. It could be an anecdote about using the company's product, why you originally wanted to go into the field you are in, additional comments on some interesting projects you have worked on, or any number of things. The cover letter is the document that ties your resume and the job posting together. Connect your professional experiences with key points from the job posting. Show that you understand what the position entails and what the company culture is like. Gather this information from researching their website and conducting informational interviews with employees at the company and professionals in similar positions.

Conclusion: Make a final statement about your employability for the position. Thank them for reading your cover letter, and indicate your desire for an interview, giving them the best way to contact you (feel free to restate your phone number and professional email address).

Kind regards,

Your typed name

SAMPLE 1: COVER LETTER

Mike Vasquez

mvasquez@hawk.iit.edu - (312) 123-4567

October 26, 2012

Red Ink Press

Dear Valerie Jones-Carpenter,

You would not believe how excited I was to see Red Ink Press seeking to hire an Assistant Editor! Red Ink Press' publications were a staple in my home, having grown up in New York. The stories were entertaining, and my family always pored over the classifieds section, which was useful for replacing our microwave for a third time. Don't ask - I was a curious child, okay?

Times have changed since I was younger. The news has more of an online presence than ever. With this changing dynamic, you will need editors who can also embrace change. During my time as an Editor for TechNews, a weekly college newspaper, we had to adjust when we started publishing our articles online. Suddenly, we had to also work with web developers, and editors had to worry about how articles would appear online. There were discussions about interactive media for the online publication. This led to a dynamic environment, and I managed to work in a lot of roles as Editor for TechNews. I have no doubt this will be invaluable experience for working at Red Ink Press.

As shown in my enclosed resume, I have also written for several local publications as a freelance contributor. Some writing samples are enclosed, so you can see for yourself the quality of my work. Something you may find useful is my familiarity with the accounting industry, having worked part-time for a CPA while in college.

Thank you for reading, and I look forward to possibly having an interview with you! Please feel free to contact me at my contact information above.

Respectfully,

Mike Vasquez

SAMPLE 2: COVER LETTER

Elsie Fitzgerald
(312) 567-5555 efitzgerald@gmail.com

June 15, 2012

Google Brain Google, Inc.

Dear Victor Reedman,

When I close my eyes and think of the future, I see a world unabashedly driven by data. In many ways we are already on that path, and I want to be one of the individuals leading the march for a better world. Interning at Google Brain is a major step for me on that path, and I hope by the end of this letter you will be convinced that investing in me will be mutually beneficial.

Machine learning is one of my favorite tools to use. Ironically, one of my projects has been to work with the brain. I was a researcher using machine learning principles to guide treatment options for patients suffering from depression. We used Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) data along with different treatment results for the patients to train an algorithm that could make more informed decisions on the effectiveness of certain treatments for certain patients. Now we have a framework that predicts what treatments will work on particular patients with a success rate of 80%, whereas without our model, prescribed treatments have an average success rate of 40%. I can only imagine what kind of improvements we would have with more data - and is that not one of Google's missions? Using data to improve the world?

I am seeking to continue such healthcare-changing work with Google Brain. With Brain's resources and my experience and drive, there is much to be accomplished. It will not be easy, but we are the ones who determine the future of the world. Google is a leader in revolutionizing the world's path to data-driven services and Google Brain will doubtlessly revolutionize data science. Will you let me work with you to change the world?

If so, attached is my resume for you to peruse at your leisure. You can reach me by phone or email found in the header.

Sincerely,

Elsie Fitzgerald