



COVER LETTER WRITING

A cover letter, also called a letter of application or covering letter, presents you for the first time to a prospective employer or networking contact. The purpose is to convey your interest in a target position, or if not applying for a specific position, then the cover letter will introduce your purpose in targeting a specific company, offering potential value to the organization.

While the CV is typically written in a rather formal manner (first person with personal pronouns understood but excluded), if done effectively, the cover letter will afford the opportunity to present your personal brand in a unique and creative way. Keep in mind that the cover letter should highlight the CV, rather than duplicate the content (which is what is seen too often). In some cases, the cover letter will be the first document, and sometimes, the only document an employer or recruiter sees, and as such, should make a stellar first impression.

The **best cover letters are ones that are customized to the role and the company.** Customizing goes beyond simply switching company names and focuses more on matching your interests and skills against the targeted role. Therefore, when writing your cover letter, keep the employer's perspective in mind. He/she is interested in what value you would add to the organization (not in how the position would benefit you). Research the industry, employer and position for which you are applying. Your cover letter should demonstrate that you know something about the organization and not just superficial details. Use the job description as a starting point for writing your cover letter and draw as many connections as possible between yourself and the position. You may want to consider making a chart like this one:

EMPLOYER'S NEEDS

Website design experience

Website design training

Computer skills

Community service

YOUR QUALIFICATIONS

→ Marketing Assistant, website design

→ Continuing Education courses

→ Adobe Design Suite, MS Office & Dreamweaver

→ Designed websites for 10 non-profit organizations

Below you will find suggestions that will help you get started in turning your cover letter into a compelling document:

1. Impress your reader quickly. In the first paragraph, after you say what job you're applying to, briefly list the major reasons you are the right candidate for the job. This task can be done in just a few words.

2. Say what you can do for the company. Companies are not in the business of giving you the experience you seek. They hire people who will potentially affect bottom line and add value. They're not interested in fulfilling career dreams.

3. Tell a good, brief story. The person reading your cover letter is a human being, and human beings like stories. If you do a good job with your cover letter, the reader will be enthralled and left wanting more.



COMMON COVER LETTER AILMENTS


If a sloppy, unfocused, or “cookie cutter” cover letter accompanies a quality CV, it is a reflection on the candidate’s concern for how important these communications are in presenting to the target company or contact. To ensure that your cover letter is doing your profile justice, stay away from the following cover letter “ailments”:

1. The “cookie cutter” cover letter. One of the most common mistakes students make in sending cover letters is not changing the information to the addressee. It becomes very obvious to the reader when the cover letter is not properly addressed to the target employer. The writer may put a new company in the address line but forget to change the company name in the body of the letter and most recruiters will consider this faux pas as proof that the candidate has little attention to detail and, more importantly, no place at their company.

2. The untailored cover letter. Behind that job description is someone who wrote it. So attempt to echo the author’s words and intent by incorporating that content directly into your letter. When the reader reviews your letter, the thought process will likely be: “This person seems to fit the description. This person understands the role.”

3. The boring/standard cover letters. Don’t waste your first paragraph by writing a boring introduction. Use the first paragraph to grab the employer’s attention. Tell the employer why you are writing and summarize the reasons you are qualified for the position, expanding on your qualifications in later paragraphs. Stay away from clichés such as “Enclosed please find my CV” or “As you can see on my CV enclosed.” Employers can see that your CV is enclosed; they don’t need you to tell them. Such stale phrases just waste precious space. Write a letter that will make the employer want to get to know you better.

4. The never-ending cover letter. Rambling on too long and telling the story of your life/career is not appropriate in person or on paper. Keep your letter as brief as possible and never exceed more than one page. Using bullet points in the letter is a good way to break up blocks of text and make the letter easier on the eyes. Many students tend to use their cover letters to provide a narrative of their life or career, but that’s not what the letter



is all about. Remember, it's a marketing tool that should focus on the qualifications that will sell you to the employer. Your letter should answer the question: "Why should I hire this person?" Use simple language and uncomplicated sentence structure and ruthlessly eliminate all unnecessary words.

5. The sloppy cover letter. Allowing typos, misspellings, or incorrect grammar/punctuation into any kind of written communication can weigh heavily on your professional reputation. Remember, your letter reflects your ability to write and communicate so be sure your document is letter-perfect before sending it out. Proofread your letter and put it down and proof it again a few hours later with a fresh eye. Then enlist a friend to review it for errors.

6. The repeated CV in the cover letter. You can use your cover letter to highlight the aspects of your CV that are relevant to the position, but you're wasting precious space and the potential employer's time if you simply repeat your CV.

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

Before you send out your cover letter remember to:

- ☐ Address your letter to a particular person whenever sending a cover letter.
- ☐ Spell the company or recipient's name correctly.
- ☐ Use a colon following the salutation.
- ☐ Indicate what position you are applying for and how you were informed of the opening.
- ☐ Clearly state why you are interested in the position and the organization.
- ☐ Provide specific examples of skills related to the position.
- ☐ Present your letter in a form that is neat and attractive.
- ☐ Avoid re-writing your CV.
- ☐ Vary the sentence structure.
- ☐ Limit the use of "I" and "my" at the beginning of each sentence.
- ☐ Express appreciation for the employer considering your application.
- ☐ Tell the employer what you can do for the organization, not what it can do for you.
- ☐ Create an original letter rather a mass-produced copy.
- ☐ Spell every word correctly.
- ☐ Verify the grammar, syntax, punctuation, and capitalization throughout the letter.
- ☐ Include your signature if possible.

COVER LETTER SAMPLE

To complete this guide, we provide up next a couple of Cover Letter examples.

James Bond

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June 20, 2016

Sharon Alexandra
Vice President of Marketing
Large Telecommunications Company
123 Avenue Road
Vancouver BC, A2A

Re: Director of Product Marketing

Dear Ms. Alexandra:

Consumers are using technology to change the way they shop. They use barcode readers to check pricing at competitors; they ignore in-store merchandising and check reviews on their smart phones before making a purchase. Adding iPhone and tablet campaigns where it clearly meets the customer's expectations and improves their engagement are but a few of the ways I improve customer retention. As a Director of Product Marketing, I have consistently designed initiatives that capture market share and secure long-term growth for one of America's market leaders.

My extensive analytical experience measuring process, rewarding quality, and streamlining programs, makes me ideally suited for the position of Director of Product Marketing with Large Telecommunications Company.

My ability to conceptualize, analyze, and problem solve, allows me to plan for opportunities that improve retention and increase profitability. I enhance profits, maximize revenues, and minimize costs through loyalty programs that shift sales to higher-margin products.

Some of my recent sales accomplishments include:

- Turning around TV retention budgets that ended the year 5 basis-points (15.5K subscribers) better than budget.
- Navigating \$10M project to launch loyalty programs that produced results despite operational and technical challenges.
- Doubling text market penetration, introducing event based marketing, and tripling take-up on new test messages.
- Delivering results 30 basis-points better than budget and expanded revenue to earn 101% of target.

Offering extensive knowledge of the American consumer, expertise across marketing functions including pricing & promotion, product marketing, customer relationship management and loyalty, I submit my résumé for your perusal. I welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person to learn more about this exciting Director of Product Marketing position and to discuss in further detail how my leadership, sales, and business expertise will be beneficial to Large Telecommunications Company.

Sincerely,

James Bond

JAMES BOND

MARIA DE MOLINA 11, 28020 MADRID

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April 26, 2016

Amadeus
Madrid, Spain

Re: Position Opening – REF M5.2522 TRAINEE in Group Learning (Corporate HR)

Dear Hiring Manager:

As a fast-learning professional with the experience and strong motivation to excel in the HR field, I am applying for the Trainee in Group Learning (Corporate HR) position you are currently advertising on the Amadeus website. My ability to work with teams, international profile, and creative approach to solving problems could be transferable strengths valued within an organization like Amadeus.

Over the course of a year, I have been preparing for a change in my career by completing my MBA with IE Business School. Although my career began in Education and provided me with a variety of skills and experiences that prepared me for diverse challenges, it has been my migration to Spain that has allowed me to see beyond the classroom. After three years of working as a Business Language Consultant with high level Spanish professionals, I decided to pursue my MBA in order to transition into a new role in the Human Resources area.

Why Human Resources? Human Resources is an area that I believe will allow me to leverage on my strong communication and client-management skills, while at the same time allowing me to apply concepts acquired from my MBA. Because I am new to the field, I firmly believe that the Trainee position is the most appropriate path to a successful transition.

Transferable experiences and strengths offered to Amadeus are as follows:

- Excellent communication and customer-service skills in building relationships.
- Experience in traveling and living internationally and collaborating with individuals from many cultures with varied communication skills, work habits, and expectations.
- Strong work ethic combined with the ability to perform in high-pressure, fast-paced environments with long hours.
- Native English language skills and an intermediate level of Spanish with a strong desire to become fluent.
- Extremely personable and transparent.

I am confident that I can continue to leverage my interpersonal and communication skills on a daily basis within the Trainee position and beyond, should you find my profile appealing. I look forward to the possibility of having a personal conversation with you, which may perhaps more fully reveal my desire and ability to contribute to Amadeus. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

James Bond