

COVER LETTERS

Most people hate to write cover letters. If you are like the majority of job seekers, you copy a sample cover letter from a cover letter reference book and mail it in with your resume. There are two problems with this: (1) everyone else copies the same letters; and (2) the cover letters illustrated in many of these books are poorly written and do not convey the information employers are looking for. Different situations require different cover letters. Following are descriptions and samples of the major kinds of cover letters.

Cover Letter Structure for Responding to Ads

Date Address Salutation Paragraph one: Mention the title of the job, where you heard of the opening (date and name of publication or Web site), and that your resume is included. Make a statement that you believe you are a strong candidate and/or includes relevant facts from your research to demonstrate your specific interest and knowledge about the company.

Paragraph two: Briefly describe your professional background, focusing on specific skills, activities, accomplishments and experiences. Select several significant requirements from the ad and match your accomplishments, qualifications and experience to them, making sure the match between their stated needs and your qualifications is obvious. Consider using bullets to make them stand out.

Paragraph three: Optional additional information on your qualifications.

Paragraph four: Reinforce your qualifications and suggest next actions. Include your phone number or e-mail address. Thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.

Closing Name Enclosure

Response to an Open Ad – Open ads list a contact and company name Vice President, Sales

Immediate opening for proven sales executive to lead national sales team. Successful candidate will manage national sales in addition to training, Motivating and developing a sales staff of 30. Must be goal-oriented, enjoy Challenge and have proven background in leading sales teams and Meeting/exceeding goals. Send cover letter and resume to Ms. Loretta Levine, ABC Corporation, 101 Parker Corporate Park, Stamford, CT 06901. **Name Address City / State / Zip Telephone Number / E-mail Address** Date Ms. Loretta Levine ABC Corporation 101 Parker Corporate Park Stamford, CT 06901

Dear Ms. Levine: In response to your February 20 advertisement in The New York Times for a Vice President, Sale, I am enclosing my resume. As a goal-oriented sales executive, I think you will find that my background and experience closely match those mentioned in your advertisement. For the past five years, as Eastern Region Sales Manager for the Business Division of McArthur Publishing, I managed a sales department with responsibilities for hiring, training and motivating a team of 23 sales professionals. Within one year, everyone on the sales staff had met or exceeded their quotas and we exceeded our sales targets by 15%. While with Gray Communications as Sales Manager for the Educational Products Division, I was responsible for managing and motivating a sales staff that doubled their renewal sales in the first six months. In addition, I developed and implemented a new compensation and incentive plan, which was successfully duplicated in two other sales functions within the company. As you will see from my resume, there are other areas that address your requirements. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss them with you and will call you next Thursday to see when we might meet and discuss how I can contribute to ABC's continued leadership in this field. Please feel free to call me at 203-555-1111. Sincerely, Name

Response to a Blind Ad – Blind ads do not give either a contact or company name

Senior Marketing Manager Dynamic professional with extensive management experience wanted for position of Senior Marketing Manager with progressive company in natural foods industry. Solid marketing Experience required as well as proven record in areas of management, financial administration, knowledge of consumer products, and product development. Minimum 10 years' experience and MBA in marketing or related field. Respond to RMN T-300. Name Address City / State / Zip Date Box T-300 Rocky Mountain News 46934 Spring Boulevard Boulder, CO 80319 Dear Hiring Manager, I was excited to find your advertisement for a Senior Marketing Manager in the August 18 Rocky Mountain News. With 10 years in the cosmetics and food industries, I am looking for a new challenge with a progressive company. I can bring the following assets to your organization:

My resume is included for your review. There are other relevant professional accomplishments in my background that could also be of interest to you. I look forward to a personal meeting to discuss them with you. You can contact me at 555-123-4567
Sincerely, Name Enclosure

Dynamic professional with extensive management experience

Proven record
Financial administration

Product development

Ten years experience and MBA

Developed multimillion dollar plans for high profit, consumer-oriented production for \$100 million division of a corporate giant.

Increased average annual sales by 15%.
Responsible for advertising and marketing budgets for 20 major consumer products.

Assisted in development of over 40 new products.

Ten years of experience in cosmetics and food industries; MBA from University of Colorado.

Structure for Letter to a Search Firm Date Address Salutation

Paragraph one: Introduce yourself, using your professional objective or job title. Describe the types of companies/industries that appeal to you. If you have a personal reference, mention it. **Paragraph two:** Mention your key selling points, list accomplishments, companies, brand names – what ever will catch the eye. Keep this paragraph short or consider using bullets. Search firms rely more on your resume to determine where you fit. Think high-impact sales letter. **Paragraph three:** State your desired compensation and benefits. Mention your resume. Provide your telephone number. Thank them for their time and consideration. **Closing Name**

Enclosure

Sample of a Letter to a Search Firm

Name Address City /

State / Zip (415) 555-1212 E-mail Address Date Ms. Susan Goldberg
Goldberg Search Group, Inc. 235 Pine Street, Suite 901 San Francisco, CA
94104 Dear Ms. Goldberg: Mal Waldron, whom you placed at Allegro

Vivace Recording Studios, told me of the work of your firm. I am seeking a position as a Marketing Manager, and I am open to considering any industry. My resume is enclosed. In my 10 years as Marketing Manager for Intensive Entertainment, I have enjoyed continuous upward mobility. Some highlights of my experience follow:

Managed a full-service marketing department, developing and implementing comprehensive marketing and public relations plans that covered national and local consumer markets.

Directed over 120 sales promotion events budgeted at \$15 million.

Consistently exceeded marketing objectives within budget as measured by sales, publicity and spin-off opportunities.

I am willing to travel or relocate. A minimum compensation package of \$125,000 plus benefits and a relocation allowance (if applicable) is my goal. My phone number is 415-555-1212. Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely, Name

Enclosure

Structure of a Post Interview Letter Your thank you letter can be typed in a business letter format or handwritten using a pre-printed thank you note. (Thank you notes appropriate for business use are available at office supply stores.) The letter or note should express appreciation for the opportunity to interview, tour the facilities, meet other employees, etc. You might also want to write about the following:

- Mention the day of your interview and the position for which you interviewed.
- Express continued interest in the position and the company.
- Re-emphasize your most important skills and qualifications and how you expect to contribute to the organization.
- Include any information you forgot to mention in the interview, if necessary (be brief though).

Close your letter with a comment about future contact with the employer.

Sample Post Interview Letter Your Name Address City, ST ZIP
Telephone - E-mail address Date Name Company Street Address City,
ST ZIP Dear _____: I appreciated the opportunity to
interview at your company last (day of week). The tour of your (facility,
offices, plant, or factory) and conversations with the staff gave me a clear
overview of the role of (title of position applying for) at your (facility, office,
plant, or factory). In particular, I was impressed with
_____ (e.g., the state-of-the-art equipment in Acme's
laboratories and the exciting medical research that is being conducted
there). The entire experience has confirmed my desire for employment as
a (title of position) with (name of company). My experience as a (former
job title), along with my (state degree, prior experience, skills, or course
work), have prepared me well for this position. Based on my interview, I
think I would fit in well with the (name of company) staff. Thank you again
for the experience of getting to know your organization better. I would
welcome the opportunity to work for (name of company), and I look forward
to hearing from you in the next two weeks. Sincerely, Your Name

Networking Letter Name Address City / State / Zip Telephone Number / E-mail Address Data Mr. Scott O'Neill Denver Chronicle 8216 Rocky Peak Road Denver, CO 80202 Dear Mr. O'Neill, The network of former First Bank employees never ceases to amaze me. I was talking with Wanda Valdez (another former First Bank colleague) and mentioned my interest in pursuing work with a communications company. She reminded me that you had joined the Denver Chronicle when you left the bank. After nine successful years at First Bank, I have decided to explore my options beyond the banking industry. In pursuit of that goal, I would like to ask for a half hour of your time to discuss your move from banking into communications, what the Chronicle is like, and any thoughts you have about companies or individuals that might be helpful to me. The following are some examples of the product management work I've been involved in over the last three years:

- Managed a number of direct mail campaigns with oversight on creative, copy and market testing. The results were strong. In one instance, the response rate roles from .23% to 2.80%.
- Developed a third-generation, interactive Web site to highlight credit products. The site includes an online application and customer profiler that has yielded a nice return.
- Created a quarterly newsletter for the checking customer population. The decidedly nontraditional, creative approach has been well-received and has helped differentiate our services.

I really would value your ideas regarding my career plans, and I would enjoy seeing you again. I will call in the next week to set up an appointment. Sincerely, Name

Acceptance Letter Sample Your Name Address Telephone City, ST
ZIP E-mail address Date Name Company Street Address City, ST
ZIP Dear _____: This letter is my formal acceptance of your
offer of employment with (name of new employer) as (job title). I find all of
the terms of employment you outlined in your letter acceptable, including
the offer of a \$_____ starting salary. Today, I formally submitted
my resignation with (name of employer). My last date of employment will
be (date). If agreeable to you, I would like my first day of employment with
(new employer) to begin on (date), as I am eager to start my new position.
Thank you for the confidence you demonstrated by selecting me for this
position and for the help you provided me with during the hiring process. I
look forward to working with you. Sincerely, Your Name

Sample Follow-up Letter to Network Contacts **Your Name** Address
Telephone City, ST ZIP E-mail address Date Name Company
Street Address City, ST ZIP Dear _____: I wanted to drop
you a note telling you that I have accepted a position as (job title) with
(name of company). My first day of employment will be (date). I also
wanted to thank you for all the help in gave me during my job search. I am
very grateful for your advice and support. If there is any way I can help
you in the future, please let me know. Again, thank you for all you have
done for me. Sincerely, Your Name

REFERENCES

A List of References should include the names and contact information of at least three business associates. The number of references depends on the length of one's work history. Never send your reference list with your resume and cover letter unless it is specifically requested that you do so. You should always take your list of references (unfolded) with you in a portfolio to the job interview and give it to the interviewer when requested. Having a prepared list of references makes you look organized. **Help Your References Give You A Good Recommendation** Even if someone thinks highly of you and wants to give you a good recommendation, not telling them ahead of time that people will be calling and asking about you does not give them an opportunity to give you the best recommendation they can. Besides, as stated above, you should always get permission in advance to use someone as a reference. But just asking them to be your reference isn't enough; you need to help them become a good reference so that they can boost your odds of getting the job offer. You can help them by doing two things. First, send them a copy of your current resume. Next call them anytime a potential employer asks for your list of references. When you call your references alert them to the fact that ABC Company has just asked for your references and describe the position for which you are being considered. Here is a sample of what a reference list should look like and the information it should contain. **Reference List**

NAME	Address	City / State / Zip Code	Telephone Number
Mr. Charles McCaslin, CEO	Widget Soundbite Company,	Portland, Oregon	Telephone Number
E-mail Address	Mr. McCaslin was my manager for five years at Widget Soundbite Company.	Ms. Daisy Wu Vice President, Engineering	Protel Telecommunications, Renton, Washington
Telephone Number	E-mail Address	Ms. Wu was a long time vendor that I negotiated with when I worked at ABC company.	Mr. Lane Mendez, Consultant
Anacortes, Washington	Telephone Number	E-mail Address	Mr. Mendez and I worked together when we were both consultants for XYZ company.