

COVER LETTERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

A Cover Letter

The purpose of a cover letter is to persuade an employer to review your resume or application and consider granting you an interview. Every time you make contact with a potential employer, whether it is a company, an organization, or a school system - you should include a cover letter. Whether you are following up on a phone conversation, writing to inquire about employment opportunities or responding to a job announcement that states "send resume" you must include a carefully written letter. Your cover letter should highlight your strongest qualifications, not simply restate information from your resume.

What Should It Look Like? What Should It Say?

- Keep your letter to one page; three or five paragraphs is the ideal length.
- Letters should always be addressed to a specific person whenever possible--this may require research or phone calls.
- Personalize each letter to reflect how your skills and experience match the skills and experience the employer is seeking.
- Refer to the source where you found the job announcement (i.e. the name of the newspaper, the web address, etc.) as well as name of position to be filled.
- Your cover letter should be professional in appearance.
- Use quality paper and envelopes, preferably the same as your resume.

Parts of a Cover Letter

The addressee: Always address your letter to the hiring manager. If you do not have a contact name, call the organization to find out the name and title of the person who is doing the hiring (be sure to get the correct spelling of the name). If you are not able to find out the contact person, use "Director of Human Resources."

Salutation: The salutation should begin with "Dear Mr." or "Dear Ms." Also, you should never use a first name in the salutation. Avoid salutations like "Dear Gentlemen," "To Whom It May Concern," and "Dear Sir."

First paragraph: State your purpose for writing the letter and include the name of the position you are applying for and what makes you the best candidate for this position
Ex: I am submitting my resume for consideration for the position of Research Assistant at Cambridge Associates. I am confident that my academic background in sociology, work experience and language skills qualify me for this position. If you are responding to a classified ad, be sure to mention the publication and the date the ad appeared. Keep the first paragraph short and powerful.

Second paragraph: Provide details on how you gained your skills and experience and how they match the qualifications of the position you are applying for
Ex: My academic background in Anthropology and independent study have prepared me with solid research and writing skills which I believe will be an asset to your team.

Third paragraph: Mention your interest and knowledge in the organization and in the industry in which you are applying
Ex: I would welcome the opportunity to work at ABC Environmental Group and to be part of a team committed to reducing toxic waste.

Closing paragraph: Close your letter with a plan of action. Tell your potential employer what you are going to do
Ex: I will call you next week to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet.

Thank You Letter

Thank you letters should be sent the next day after the interview to all the people you met with during your interview. The letter should acknowledge any special efforts such as lunch or office tours, as well as confirm your interest in the position. If necessary, it is also appropriate to mention relevant information you forgot to relate in the interview.

Letter Of Acceptance Of Job Offer

The letter of acceptance is used to confirm phone conversation and/or letter offering position. The letter should include employment information discussed verbally such as salary and starting date.

Letter Declining Job Offer

It is important to send a letter declining a job offer in order to maintain good personal relations with employers in case you decide to reconsider employment with this organization at a later date.

Sign Your Letters

Always sign your letters in the space between the complimentary closing and your typed name!

Randolph College
Campus Box 899
2500 Rivermont Ave.
Lynchburg, VA 24503

September 29, 2006

Abraham Lincoln
Managing Director
Youth Villages
595 Broadway Blvd.
Hendersonville, N.C. 28792

Dear Mr. Lincoln:

I have long admired Youth Village's practice of hiring graduates with solid liberal arts backgrounds for social service trainee positions. In fact, it was with Youth Villages in mind that I became a philosophy major. I will graduate next month and am prepared to bring my critical thinking, problem solving, and communications skills to Youth Village's social services trainee program.

The abilities I've developed during my college career align extremely well with the skills Youth Villages seeks in its social service trainees. As a philosophy student, I've learned to digest and summarize large amounts of complex information, present ideas both orally and in writing in an organized and coherent fashion, reshape ideas in light of new circumstances, and ask creative questions to stimulate discussion. My research of Youth Villages tells me these are exactly the skills that can drive us to mutual success.

Having earned my way through college through a series of responsible jobs, I've been able to demonstrate a strong work ethic. I have functioned effectively as a social services assistant during my internship with the Life Care Center of Hendersonville. I employed skills that align remarkably well with those listed in the trainee positions. Through my internship, I developed the ability to deal effectively with people, to exercise clear and concise communication skills, and learned to promote good relationships within a group and in the community. I also displayed teamwork and a competitive drive through my co-captainship of the basketball and volleyball teams.

I am confident that I have the "right stuff" to make my mark in your social services trainee program, and I am eager to meet with you to review my suitability as a Youth Village employee. May I call you next week to schedule an appointment? Thank you for including me in your application pool.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Prewitt

Randolph College
Box 99
2500 Rivermont Ave.
Lynchburg, VA 24503

June 15, 2005

Dorothy Manheim
Director of Consumer Affairs
City of Chicago
1115 Wacker Drive
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Ms. Manheim:

I'm interested in bringing the fresh insights of a new psychology graduate to the advertised position of assistant director of consumer affairs. I recently graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Randolph College. My senior research paper centered around consumer behavior in urban populations.

My psychology studies have provided me with the ability to deal effectively with people, as well as with great insight into consumer psychology. The many group projects I've engaged in during college have taught me a great deal about promoting good relationships within a group and in the community. Several research classes have enabled me to develop solid interviewing techniques in investigative, reporting, and marketing research contexts. I have also taken several marketing courses, including one in consumer behavior.

I am most eager to meet with you and share my ideas about this position. I plan to contact your office on July 1 to schedule a time to meet. Please also feel free to reach me at 424-947-9999.

Please accept my appreciation for your consideration of my qualifications.

Sincerely,

Mia Moffitt

Sample Cover Letters

304 Langhorne Road
Lynchburg, 24503

October 23, 2003

Ms. Patricia Carmines
Vice-President
WHRO Public Television
1140 Main Street
Boston, MA 24583

Dear Ms. Carmines:

Please accept the enclosed resume as an expression of my interest in contributing relevant experience to the position of Sales Representative, as advertised in the Boston Globe on Sunday, October 18.

I have accumulated several years of experience in the development of sales and marketing strategies. I have been involved in a number of diverse employment situations, including a self-owned business, in which I successfully utilized various sales techniques, including cold calling, telemarketing, and prospecting. In my first two years at FloSoft, I increased our client base by 25 percent. While at the Brian Agency, I was part of a sales team that generated a record-breaking \$10 million in one year. In addition, I have held numerous positions where I supervised and developed personnel and assisted in the facilitation of daily operations.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss ways in which my capabilities could be directed to meet your needs. I will call you next Monday to arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Anna Katherine Williams

Enclosure

Sample Cover Letter -- Letter of Inquiry

2500 Rivermont Avenue
Box 828
Lynchburg, VA 24503

August 7, 2003

Mr. Michael C. White
Director of Human Resources
Reynolds Metals, Inc.
P. O. Box 131
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Mr. White:

I will be graduating this May from Randolph College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics. I am interested in pursuing a position with a large and successful company, such as Reynolds Metals, that seeks innovative, analytical solutions to a variety of problems where applied physics is necessary. After exhaustive research, I discovered your company and the interesting work you do. I am excited about pursuing career opportunities, with emphasis on theoretical physics or applied/engineering physics, with your Research and/or Product Development branches. I would be perfectly willing to relocate to your headquarters or any one of your branches.

Enclosed is a copy of my resume highlighting my intensive research experience. In theoretical physics, my academic training in Classical and Quantum Mechanics, Electricity and Magnetism, electronics, continuum Mechanics, and theoretical Particle Physics has given me the ability to analyze and calculate complex problems more quantitatively. In experimental physics, my knowledge of theoretical physics was tested on the design, maintenance, and assembly of delicate detector equipment. Throughout my research and work experience, I have worked with a team to achieve a common goal and, as a result, have developed excellent interpersonal skills, precision in performance, and great attention to detail.

I would like to discuss my future with Reynolds Metals. I am available for an interview at your convenience, and can be reached at 434-947-2242 until May 15. After that date, I can be reached at 804-673-0987. I look forward to hearing from you and will follow up this letter with a call in approximately one to two weeks. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Elizabeth Watkins

Enclosure

Sample Cover Letter -- Networking

2500 Rivermont Avenue
Box 828
Lynchburg, VA 24503

November 1, 2003

Mr. Thomas Elliott
Director of Recruiting
Andersen Consulting
225 Peachtree Street, NE
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Mr. Elliott:

I am a junior at Randolph College with a major in economics. I am looking for an internship position with Andersen Consulting to correspond with my interests and educational background and to gain experience in this field. Elizabeth Perry gave me your name and suggested that I contact you about available opportunities.

For almost two years, I have worked for Britches Great Outdoors. I began as a cashier and was promoted to sales associate. This past summer, I worked full time in a high-volume store, and I consistently achieved top sales in the store, the division and the company. Presently, I am working 10-15 hours per week at American Eagle in Lynchburg, while attending classes full time. These experiences have provided me with the opportunity to develop strong interpersonal and communication skills, as well as time-management skills.

I also can offer strong research, analytical and computer skills. For the second half of my winter break, I have been given the opportunity to extern with EDI Partners, Inc., a consulting firm in Richmond, Virginia. My responsibilities will include developing home pages for the Internet and building the links to the World Wide Web. This experience will enable me to work with highly advanced software and to build my research skills.

My experiences in the classroom have given me the opportunity to cultivate many skills. My marketing classes have focused on developing strong presentation skills. There is also a great deal of emphasis placed on group dynamics. I have had several opportunities to work on projects in groups, and I have been able to make professional presentations.

Enclosed you will find my resume, outlining my skills and experience in more detail. I will be in Atlanta from December 23 through December 30. I realize this is a very busy time of year, but I would like to meet with you to discuss internship opportunities. I will be contacting your office within the next two weeks to see if this is convenient for you. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Janet Evans

Enclosure

Sample Thank You Letter

2500 Rivermont Avenue
Box 650
Lynchburg, VA 24503

February 23, 2003

Mr. Patrick Cummings
Editor
PC Publication
1140 Main Street
Nashua, OH 03061

Dear Mr. Cummings:

I want to thank you for interviewing me yesterday for the Assistant Editor position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your organization.

My enthusiasm for the position and my interest in working for PC Publication were strengthened as a result of our meeting. I am confident that my education and experience fit nicely with the job requirements, and I am sure I could make a significant contribution to the company over time.

I would like to reiterate my strong interest in the position and in working with you. Please feel free to call me at 434-947-3272 if I can provide you with any additional information.

Again, thank you for the interview and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tamara Anne Joyner

Sample Acceptance Letter

832 Arlington Street
Lynchburg, VA 24503

April 24, 2003

Ms. Hannah L. Holt
Director of Personnel
IBT Corporation
123 Bells Road
Norfolk, VA 23237

Dear Ms. Holt:

Per our telephone conversation of April 20, 2002, I would like to confirm my acceptance of your employment offer. The position of Research Assistant provides exactly the kind of experience I hope to find. I feel confident that I can make a significant contribution to IBT Corporation, and I am grateful for the opportunity you have given me.

As we discussed, I will report to work on Monday, July 5, 2002. Again, thank you for your offer. I will keep in touch as my start date nears.

Sincerely,

Julia Hendricks

Sample Letter Declining Job Offer

2500 Rivermont Avenue
Box 155
Lynchburg, VA 24502

March 25, 2003

Dr. Amy Little
Senior Research Manager
AlliedSignal
P. O. Box 2030
Hopewell, VA 23404

Dear Dr. Little:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on Friday to discuss the opportunities for employment within your research and development department. While I appreciate your generous offer, I have decided to decline the position. I have accepted a position elsewhere which I feel is better suited to my long-term goals.

Again, many thanks for your time. I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors at AlliedSignal.

Sincerely,

Jessica North