

A PHARMACEUTICAL SALES COVER LETTER

While seeking a career in pharmaceutical sales, it is important to realize that the resume is very important but it is important to note that many pharmaceutical employers look at a job applicant's cover letter with more frequency. Thus, cover letters and other types of job search letters can play a critical role in getting invited to a pharmaceutical sales interview as well as offered a position. If an individual neglects these letters then they will neglect some of the most important elements of their job search. The cover letter is meant to compliment and enhance a pharmaceutical sales resume.

The cover letter is a special type of career search letter. By definition, it will always accompany your pharmaceutical sales resume and will be targeted toward a particular pharmaceutical company. We recommend a target cover letter. Each letter will provide an enhancement to your enclosed pharmaceutical sales resume.

THE TARGETED COVER LETTER

The targeted cover letter is the most widely used career search letter. It is addressed to a specific individual and is in reference to a particular position which may or many not be vacant. It typically is written to a response to an internet ad or vacancy announcement or sent to a company that the candidate is interested in working for.

A targeted cover letter should be specific and oriented toward the needs of the pharmaceutical employer. The content of this letter should reflect as much knowledge of the pharmaceutical employer and sales position as possible. It is important to emphasize your skills that appear most compatible with the needs of the employer and requirements of the sales position. In the letter, you should tell the employer why they should take time to talk with you by telephone or meet you in person to further discuss your qualifications as they relate to pharmaceutical sales. The letter should communicate both professional and personal qualities about you and should state that you are also a competent and outgoing individual.

If possible, always try to address the cover letter to a specific person, by name and their title. A proper salutation should begin with Mr., Mrs., or Ms. If you not sure whether you are writing to a male or female then use their full name, "Dear Pat Smith" or "Dear C. J. White." Many of the pharmaceutical sales vacancies you may find will include only an address. If you are not able to determine whom to address your cover letter to, use one of the following choices:

1. “Dear Sir or Madam” or “Dear Sir/Madam.” This is the formal, neutral and most acceptable way of addressing an anonymous pharmaceutical staffing professional.
2. Eliminate the perfunctory salutation altogether and go directly from the return address to the first paragraph, leaving three spaces between the two sections. This open style works best since it directs your cover letter to the organization in the same manner in which the anonymous advertisement was addressed. Your opening sentence will provide information which will indicate to whom the resume/cover letter goes.

Whatever your choices, do not address the individual as “Dear Sir,” “Dear Person”, “Dear Pharmaceutical Company,” “Dear Personnel Department”, “To whom it may concern,” “Dear Friend,” or “Dear Future Employer.” Employers are not your friends and using a “Sir” could be inappropriate if the employer may end up being a female. These salutations do nothing to evaluate your chances of getting an interview with the potential pharmaceutical employer. Several are negative and some of the above examples are just stupid. So the rule is “when in doubt leave it out.”

The target cover letter is designed to directly connect you to the needs of the pharmaceutical employer. It typically is divided into three different paragraphs. In response to an advertisement or vacancy announcement, for example, the first paragraph of the cover letter should connect you to the open position by way of introduction. For openers, a reference should be made to the employer’s advertisement:

- I recently was informed about your pharmaceutical sales position on Monster.com.

The following sentences should then connect your experience, skills and goals to the pharmaceutical sales position and employer:

- I was informed yesterday about your pharmaceutical sales position on Monster.com. I have three years of successful sales experience in the consumer goods industry and was responsible for over \$124 million in sales. I am very interested in taking on a new challenge and entering the pharmaceutical industry. I am aware that your pharmaceutical company values team performance and wishes to explore new markets.

The opening paragraph is short but to the point, grabs attention and avoids the “canned” language” that so many other cover letters possess. The pharmaceutical sales cover letter emphasizes four key points:

1. Where and when you learned about the pharmaceutical sales position—the letter makes a logical and legitimate connection to the employer. Also, pharmaceutical employers like to know where candidates learn about open positions to determine the effectiveness of their advertising expenses.
2. You have experience and specific skills that directly relate to the pharmaceutical employer needs.
3. You are interested in this pharmaceutical sales position because you want to progress in your career rather than because of need (not presently working) or greed (looking for more money). The career change is both industry and career-centered rather than self-centered.
4. Your tone is professional, personal, positive, and fairly neutral. The paragraph avoids making canned, self-serving, or flattering statements about yourself and the pharmaceutical company. The interviewer is not impressed with your skills, interests, and knowledge of the company. The reader's initial response is to read more about you which would also lead them to reviewing your resume.

If you send a cover letter and resume in response to a networking referral, the only change in reference involves the first sentence. In this particular case, you may or may not be responding to a specific job vacancy. A pharmaceutical employer may be surveying existing applicants to see who is available to them. This happens frequently in this industry as a pharmaceutical company may hire someone without ever advertising a vacancy. In this type of cover letter, the emphasis is again on making a connection with the pharmaceutical staffing person. The tone is a little more personal:

Bill Riley, who I believe spoke with you last Tuesday about my interest in working for your company, suggested I contact you about my sales experience and pharmacology training. He mentioned that you wanted to see my resume.

I have four years of successful sales experience which involved in over 1.3 million in revenue for my employer. I am interested in the challenges that the pharmaceutical industry presents and would like to work for a pharmaceutical firm like yours that values team performance and wishes to explore new markets.

This is the best type of referral you can receive - an intermediary has already introduced you to a pharmaceutical employer who is requesting your resume. The referral has already legitimized your candidacy and screened your qualifications based on their own judgment and personal relationship with the pharmaceutical employer. If the referral is highly respected by the employer you will have your “foot” in the door. At this point, you will need to reinforce their judgment with a well-crafted cover letter, a resume and then followed up with a personal phone call. In this particular case, you do not need to

mention a specific pharmaceutical sales position being advertised since there may not be one. Include only the name of your referral as well as refer to those interests and skills you know will be compatible with a pharmaceutical sales position. The most important element in this letter is the reference to the referral.

THANK YOU LETTERS

Thank-you letters can become some of the most effective communications in a pharmaceutical sales job search. The thank-you letters demonstrate an important etiquette that says something about you as a person, your personality, and how you most likely relate to other people. The thank-you letter can communicate one of the most important characteristics sought in a potential pharmaceutical sales representative - thoughtfulness.

Even better, since only a few applicants write thank-you letters, those who write them are remembered by the staffing professionals. One thing that you definitely want to happen during your pharmaceutical job search is to be remembered by professionals who can provide you with useful information, advice, and referrals as well as invite you to job interviews. If you are remembered as a thoughtful person with good etiquette, this will give you an edge over other applicants who fail to write them. It is vital then to make sure you regularly send thank-you letters in response to all professionals that assist you in your pharmaceutical sales job search.

Many successful pharmaceutical sales career seekers have discovered through their search that their cover letters have ended up making a significant impact in their results. These letters can have several positive outcomes and we have included some examples below:

- Contact turn into more contacts which then turned into more pharmaceutical sales interviews.
- A pharmaceutical employer informed an applicant after they were hired that it was their thoughtful thank-you letter that gave them the edge over the other 3 candidates.
- A candidate receives a rejection letter from a pharmaceutical company but sends a thank-you letter in which they note disappointment in not being selected but thanks for their time. The employer remembers this person and decides to not let them get away and hires them for a different sales territory.
- A thank-you letter was sent to a new pharmaceutical sales rep manager after they accepted a recent job offer. This letter ended up making a strong and immediate impact on their relationship.

- A thank-you letter was sent by a pharmaceutical sales representative after they were terminated. This letter resulted in many positive recommendations for the sales representative from the past employer.

For many pharmaceutical sales job seekers, it is always unclear when to write a thank-you letter. So below you will find scenarios and situations where thank-you letters should be sent:

- After receiving information, advice, or any referral from a pharmaceutical industry contact.
- Immediately after interviewing for a pharmaceutical sales opportunity.
- After receiving a rejection for a particular pharmaceutical sales job.
- Withdrawing your name from consideration.
- After receiving a job offer.
- Upon leaving a pharmaceutical sales position.

PHARMACEUTICAL SALES COVER LETTER

Response to an open sales opportunity

Inita Smith

725 Main Street
Las Vegas, NV 77321

May 10, 2005

Karen Eisele
Sales Staffing Director
Forest Laboratories
13219 Fleming Boulevard
Jersey City, NJ 01284

Dear Ms. Eisele:

The accompanying resume is in response to an advertisement found on Monster.com for a pharmaceutical sales representative.

I am extremely interested in this position because my experience as an Account Executive with Pitney Bowes has prepared me for the challenges associated with a career in pharmaceutical sales. As a consistent performer and Presidential award winner with Pitney Bowes, I am confident that my sales skills will be a good addition to your sales team. My goal is to utilize this experience with a growing and innovative company such as yours.

I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss how my experience will best meet your needs. My diverse sales abilities may be of particular interest to you. I will call your office on the morning of May 21 to inquire if a meeting can be scheduled at a convenient time.

I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely yours,

Karen Eisele

PHARMACEUTICAL SALE COVER LETTER

Referral

Eric Theis
2201 Okemos Road
St. Petersburg, FL 33481

May 12, 2005

Kim Hopkins
Eli Lilly Pharmaceuticals
12822 Elway Style Blvd.
Indianapolis, IN 23931

Dear Kim Hopkins:

Dan Heim, the District Sales Manager for the Las Vegas territory, informed me that you are looking for someone to add to your sales team as an entry-level pharmaceutical sales representative.

I enclose my resume for your consideration. I am a recent college graduate from Ohio State University with a major in marketing and a minor in chemistry. I have had two internships where I have held a leadership role and have worked part time as a retail sales representative. I am particularly interested in a career in pharmaceutical sales.

I would appreciate an opportunity to visit with you and discuss the open sales position. Perhaps I could provide you additional information about myself prior to an interview. I will call you next week to see if we can make arrangements for a visit.

I look forward to meeting with you next week.

Sincerely,

Eric Theis

PHARMACEUTICAL SALES THANK YOU LETTER

Post Job Interview

Bill Pharmajob

2318 Boone Valley Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 64301
(222) 666-8665
Bill.p@earth.com

Brenda Wieman
Director, Human Resources
Amylin Pharmaceuticals
4391 Laboratory Lane
Buffalo, NY 12019

Dear Ms. Wieman:

Thank you again for the opportunity to interview for the entry-level pharmaceutical sales position. I appreciate your hospitality and enjoyed meeting you and your assistant.

The interview convinced me of how compatible my background, interests, and skills are with the goals of Amylin Pharmaceuticals. As we discussed, I am a quick learner with a strong propensity for sales. In my current position, I have been very successful in selling consumer goods. This work required client relations with careful follow through and execution. I am confident that my skills and experience would increase market share for Amylin Pharmaceuticals' urology product line.

I look forward to meeting you and your staff again.

Sincerely,

Bill Pharmajob