

# HOW TO WRITE A PROFESSIONAL COVER LETTER

## **BUSINESS LETTER TIPS**

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The following tips are suggestions that you should consider when writing and sending your cover letter or a business letter to prospective employers:

- Use white or light colored paper in standard size (8 ½ x 11 inches).
- Be sure to include a cover letter with mailed and emailed resumes. When you email a resume and cover letter, create a short introduction to use as your email body.
- The letter should be easy to read, crisp, and have a format and style that is consistent with that of your resume.
- Always update your cover letter for each position that you apply for.

### **Formatting:**

- Do not use a template, invisible text boxes, special graphics, color, or shading. Always submit your letter in a .pdf format.
- Use standard, non-decorative fonts between 10-12 pt. in black ink only. Remember to match the look of your resume to create a packaged look for the employer.
- Margins should be equally set between .6 – 1 inch on all sides.
- Letters should not exceed 1 page and should not be folded.

**Always proofread your cover letter before you send it!**

## **HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER**

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A cover letter is a unique and personalized way to introduce yourself or explain why you are sending a resume to a potential employer for a job opening. Your cover letter should explain to the employer why you are interested in their company or available position and why you are the best candidate. The idea is not to repeat information found on your resume, but to highlight your best accomplishments or abilities and indicate how your qualifications meet the employer's requirements. In addition, a cover letter should convince the reader to look at your resume, reflect your attitude, and indicate how you will follow-up. When writing your letter, try to bury the "I" and, instead, begin sentences with phrases.

Cover letters are generally submitted with your resume, online or through email. You will not need to bring a cover letter to the UTD EXPO Days. The letter should contain the following information, in this order:

- Heading with your contact information (should match the heading on your resume)
- Date that you send the letter
- Employer's contact information
- Greeting
- Introduction paragraph
- Supporting, or "selling" paragraph(s)
- Closing paragraph
- Closing (sincerely, etc.)
- Your signature
- Enclosure (optional)

### **INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH**

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This paragraph should tell the employer the exact position that you're applying for, where you found the posting, as well as highlight a few key qualifications that match the job description. You may also tell the employer why you want to work for them or what intrigued you about their company or position – point out something you found on their website or something you discussed with a recruiter.

### **SUPPORTING/"SELLING" PARAGRAPH**

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The central paragraph of the cover letter is unique for each person, but the premise is the same: sell yourself! Here, you want to describe how you fulfill the job's requirements by expanding on what you have talked about in your resume (do not repeat information) or providing additional information not on the resume. Remember that your qualifications come from education, projects, work and volunteer history, activities, etc. Always keep the job description in mind and show, or prove, to the employer by providing examples and quantifiable results of your accomplishments if possible. If this paragraph becomes too long, you may separate it into two.

### **CLOSING PARAGRAPH**

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Be strong in this paragraph! Stay away from using phrases such as, "I hope or wish..." and "would or could". Instead, use a phrase such as "I look forward to..." or, "I will...". Make sure to thank them for their time and consideration of your application. Also, provide your email address and phone number again, as well as mention how you will follow-up.

### **ENCLOSURE**

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If you are sending anything other than a cover letter (a resume, for example) use "Enclosure" after your name/signature so the employer knows to expect documents in addition to the letter.

# **ATTENTION**

The following cover letters and business letters are for reference purposes only, and copying them word-for-word is a form of academic dishonesty. It is imperative that your cover letter and information reflect your own skills, abilities, and experience. It is strongly recommended that templates and boilerplate wording be avoided to create a strong, effective cover letter.

**Do not provide false information or copy wording from other sources.**

## SAMPLE 1: COVER LETTER

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**May Phearlis**

478 Las Colinas Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89123

(555) 555-7814

may@email.com

June 10, 2010

Some Corporation

555 Street Lane

Dallas, TX 75000

Dear Hiring Manager,

As a dynamic and eager professional, I can make a significant contribution to positively impact the overall initiative of Some Corporation. I'm writing to apply for the Operations and Programs Manager position and know that my diverse professional background within operations and programming would allow me to bring the following value to your organization:

- **Strong Project Management Skills.** As a Project Manager at XYZ Corporation, I have been involved in planning, research, and strategy implementation of over 200 major programs, administrative processes and marketing initiatives.
- **Organizational and Analytical Skills.** Throughout my education and research initiatives, I have demonstrated my strengths in data research and analysis, project organization, and computer efficiency. I am competent in organizing and reporting data as well as utilizing these tools to improve efficiency in administrative processes.
- **Strong Supervisory and Leadership Skills.** I have managed and trained employees and teams while being committed to developing processes for future employees to follow. My individualistic approach allows me to connect with direct reports and team members and encourage participation and high performance.

In each organization, I have consistently demonstrated my ability to execute on complex initiatives – meeting and exceeding the organization's goals, while maintaining my outgoing and enthusiastic demeanor and personality. I know that with my strong work ethic, time management skills, and professionalism, I can meet and exceed the goals of your organization. Thank you in advance for reviewing my credentials and I look forward to speaking with you soon. Please contact at (555) 555-7814 or may@email.com should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

May Phearlis

Enclosure

## SAMPLE 2: COVER LETTER

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*Sample Based On Cover Letter from 2013 Career Thought Leaders Conference & Symposium: Writing Resumes for Graduating Students: Traditional and Not-So-Traditional by Chrystal McArthur, Career Services, Rutgers University*

### Anita Job

345 Coit Street • Richardson, TX 75080 • 972-789-1234 • amj12547@utdallas.edu

January 4, 2013

Pearson Publishing Company  
200 Madison Avenue  
New York, New York 20012

To the Manager of College Recruiting:

Books, research, and writing have been an important part of my life for many years. I have a love of learning and have embraced a variety of academic subjects while also participating in community service and cultural activities during my college career. My broad based experiences have given me a good foundation to begin a career in publishing.

As I read the announcement on your website for the **Editorial Internship**, I became very excited because this is precisely the type of opportunity that I seek. Recently, I completed an internship at Princeton University Press as an **Editorial Reference Intern**. While there, I learned a great deal about academic publishing and I would now like to extend my experiences to the trade publishing world. The departments of E-books, Production, Publicity, and Design are of special interest to me, although I would consider all opportunities. Through my internship and work experiences I have developed skills that could be an asset to your company:

- Well-honed organizational abilities developed through work and academic responsibilities, as demonstrated by my ability to graduate with high honors.
- Meticulous attention to detail, as evidence by my work at the Princeton Press and highlighted as one of my strengths in the internship.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills practiced through work and community service experiences.
- Willingness to learn and to take on challenging projects and see them through to completion in a timely manner.

Enclosed is my resume for your review. I am available for an interview so I can share my experiences in more detail. I can be reached at 917- 482- 8253 or amj12547@utdallas.edu. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to speaking with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Anita Job

## **SAMPLE 3: COVER LETTER**

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*Sample Based On "Cold" Letter to a Potential Employer: Computer Software Designer from The Everything Cover Letter Book by Steven Graber*

### **Carson Smith**

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178 Green St. • Decorah, IA 52101 • (319) 555-5552 • csmith@netmail.com

February 12, 2013

Pat Cummings  
Personnel Director  
Any Corporation  
1140 Main St.  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

Dear Ms. Cummings:

As a graduate student completing a Master of Science in Computer Science in May 2013, I am seeking a position in Application or System-Oriented Software design. I found your posting through the University of Texas at Dallas' CometCareers database and am highly interested in applying because of Any Corporation's long standing reputation of innovation and excellence in the field of computer science and software development.

My two years' experience as a Database Designer and six months' experience as an Intern at Puttnee Bowles have equipped me with the skills outlined in your job requirements. I have considerable experience with DBMS packages, like Oracle, Ingres, DB2, FoxPro, and OS/2 Data Manager. In addition to my professional experience, I have been coding and designing programs for several years as a hobby. My online portfolio can be found at [smithcodeanddesign.com](http://smithcodeanddesign.com).

My formal academic training has also provided me with opportunities to work with C and many languages in the Unix and Windows environments. Working individually or as part of a team, I have successfully completed numerous programming assignments in courses such as Software Testing and Verification, Introduction to Programming Video Games, and Object-Oriented Programming Systems. With competence in Unix, C, SAS, Pascal, and a variety of other programming languages, I am comfortable in SUNOS, DOS, and VAX operating systems. I have also used a variety graphics, spreadsheet, database, desktop publishing, word processing, and telecommunication applications.

In addition to my experience and academic preparation, I became involved in several students organizations where I developed excellent problem-solving, communication, and interpersonal skills that would contribute to the design department of Any Corporation. I look forward to hearing from you soon and appreciate your time and consideration of my application. If you have any questions, please contact me at (319) 555-5552 or [csmith@netmail.com](mailto:csmith@netmail.com).

Sincerely,

Carson Smith

Enclosure

## **SAMPLE 4: THANK YOU LETTER**

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It is acceptable to send thank you letters by e-mail. You can attach the format shown below in a .pdf file or you can use the body of the e-mail as the thank you letter. If you write the thank you in the body of the email, leave off all addresses and start with the salutation, using the interviewer's correct title and last name. The thank you letter in the body of the e-mail should be no more than 3 or 4 sentences long. Send a customized thank you letter to each interviewer within the company.

**May Phearlis**

478 Las Colinas Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89123  
(555) 555-7814  
may@email.com

November 4, 2010

Ms. Heather Smith  
Marketing Manager  
(Company Name)  
Company Address  
City, State Zip

Dear Ms. Smith:

It was a pleasure to meet with you and Rahul Kumar yesterday. The additional information I learned about (Company Name) solidified my desire to obtain the challenging and exciting opportunity of Software Design Consultant.

As mentioned, I believe that my years of experience designing computer software and my strong educational background can be an asset to your organization. Per your suggestion, I will call your office next week to check on my status in the hiring process.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration of my credentials.

Sincerely,

May Phearlis



## **SAMPLE 5: ACCEPTING A JOB OFFER**

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**May Phearlis**

478 Las Colinas Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89123

(555) 555-7814

may@email.com

November 4, 2010

Ms. Susan Goyal  
Human Resources Manager  
(Company Name)  
Company Address  
City, State Zip

Dear Ms. Goyal:

After receiving the offer letter (or phone call), I am very pleased to accept the position of Marketing Analyst at \$30,000 per year. I have been very impressed by (Company Name) throughout the entire interview process and look forward to joining such a quality company.

As we discussed, I have a tentative start date of January 17, 2013, and will be reporting to David Smith, Group Vice President of Marketing.

In the meantime, if you require anything of me or have questions please call me at (555) 555-7814. I am very excited about this opportunity and am looking forward to contributing to the success of the company. Thanks again to you and (name of organization) for all of your help.

Sincerely,

May Phearlis

## **SAMPLE 6: DECLINING A JOB OFFER**

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**May Phearlis**

478 Las Colinas Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89123

(555) 555-7814

may@email.com

November 4, 2010

Mr. Patrick Smith  
Manager  
(Company Name)  
Company Address  
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. Smith:

I would like to thank you again for the job offer with (Company Name). I enjoyed our conversation about the (job title) position and appreciate the time you have taken with me.

This has been a very difficult decision for me, and after much careful thought I have decided I must decline your offer. I feel this is the best decision for me at this time. Respectfully, I wanted to let you know as soon as possible so you can find another candidate for this opportunity.

Again, I want to thank you for your time. I wish you the best of luck and hope our paths cross again in the future.

Sincerely,

May Phearlis

## **SAMPLE 7: RESPONDING TO JOB REJECTION**

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**May Phearlis**

478 Las Colinas Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89123

(555) 555-7814

may@email.com

November 4, 2010

Mr. Patrick Smith  
Manager  
(Company Name)  
Company Address  
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. Smith:

I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to interview for the Assistant Editor position with (Company Name). Although I am disappointed I was not chosen, I enjoyed meeting with you and your staff and learning more about your company.

I continue to be interested in joining your organization and would appreciate it if you would keep me in mind for future openings.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

May Phearlis

## **SAMPLE 8: INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW / NETWORKING / APPROACH**

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**May Phearlis**

478 Las Colinas Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89123

(555) 555-7814

may@email.com

November 4, 2010

Mr. Robert Young  
Telecommunications Consultant  
(Company Name)  
Company Address  
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. Young:

Judy Chu, who worked with you on several promotional projects, gave me your name and suggested that I set up an informational interview with you. Judy Smith assisted me in obtaining an internship position in Marketing with (Company Name). She felt that I would benefit from your extensive industry experience.

I am interested in joining a company where I can contribute strong skills and education in the Marketing arena. My qualifications are as follows:

- A Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing from The University of Texas at Dallas, graduating December 2010.
- Familiarity with all areas of marketing, public relations, and advertising.
- On-the-job experience with (Company Name) and (Company Name).
- Fluency in Japanese, Spanish, and English.

I would greatly appreciate any advice or referrals you might be able to provide. I will contact your office on Friday morning to schedule a few minutes of your time.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

May Phearlis