

COVER LETTERS

BEFORE YOU WRITE YOUR COVER LETTER –

UNDERSTAND WHAT IT IS, WHY YOU SHOULD WRITE ONE, AND WHERE YOU SHOULD RESEARCH

<p>What is a Cover Letter</p>	<p>According to the Purdue OWL, "a cover letter introduces you and your resume to potential employers or organizations you seek to join." This resource rightly points out that the cover letter is seen before the resume. It's important to make a good impression. The OWL also gives the following points about the cover letter's importance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "A good cover letter will explain your experiences in more detail than your resume." • "A good cover letter will show that you are writing to a specific job. It will be individualized for the organization. It should not look like it's a form letter." • "A good cover letter will reflect positively on your written communication skills."
<p>Why to Write a Cover Letter</p>	<p>Writing a cover letter demonstrates that you are a serious job seeker. To not write one implies that you are just randomly applying to a lot of opportunities whether you are a good fit for them or not. A cover letter also allows you to demonstrate your enthusiasm for the position and will provide a glimpse into your personality.</p>
<p>Preparing to Write a Cover Letter</p>	<p>Before writing your cover letter, review the position description. Make a list of the skills, qualifications, and traits described in it and make notes about how you fit these examples from previous experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember, an experience can be paid or unpaid. • An experience can be job, and internship, or volunteer work. • Your accomplishments from being involved in a campus organization can be used. <p>A good position description will give you some information about the organization's culture. If this information isn't readily available, research the company website. Look for key words that are repeated on the website. These will let you know what is important to the company. Does this company value innovation or service to the community? Is the environment fast paced or laid back? Make notes of these company descriptors and reflect upon how you fit in with the culture.</p>
<p>Identify Your Strengths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have taken the Clifton Strengths Assessment, you already know your top five strengths. Address how you use these strengths and how they can be helpful to the company. You may identify strengths matches from position descriptions. • For example, if the position description outlines the need for a self-starter and one of your strengths is Activator, then there is a clear match to your strengths and their needs. You may write a something like this in your cover letter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "From the position description, I note that you seek someone who is a self-starter. One of my strengths is my ability to quickly turn thoughts into action. As a member of student government, I established a bike rental program on campus that had been discussed with no action for two years. Within, 6 weeks of accepting my role, we had the program up and running."

Scroll to the next page for cover letter formatting and more information....

Parts of a Cover Letter	Explanations & Suggestions	Examples
Heading	<p>The heading should include your contact information, the company contact information, and the date you are writing the letter. For a traditional format, single space the information within each section and leave a space between each section as shown. Alignment should be left justified.</p> <p>Whenever possible the company contact should be a specific person. If this information is not available use "Hiring Manager" or "Hiring Committee" as the contact. Avoid using the phrase "To Whom it May Concern."</p> <p>When addressing a specific person, it is best to be gender neutral, such as "Devon Smith," instead of "Mr. Devon Smith" or "Ms. Devon Smith."</p>	<p>Sandy Shark 123 Tsunami Drive Bluffton, SC 29902 843-208-5432</p> <p>April 15, 2024</p> <p>Devon Smith Director of Human Resources XYZ Corporation 678 Corporate Drive Columbia, SC 29044</p>
Introduction	<p>The introduction includes the salutation. To be gender neutral, use the person's full name. A colon is used at the end of the salutation. A space should go between the salutation and the first paragraph.</p> <p>The first paragraph should introduce yourself and why you are writing. It should be clear to what position you are applying. This paragraph can state how you learned about this opportunity, especially if someone inside the company recommended you apply.</p> <p>There are many variations to consider in this first paragraph. Remember that it is an introduction so keep it focused. It is important to show your genuine interest, even enthusiasm, for the position right from the beginning.</p>	<p><i>A basic introduction may read like this:</i></p> <p>Dear Devon Smith:</p> <p>I learned from Ed Spaniel that your company is planning to hire a social media marketing assistant, and I am submitting the enclosed resume for your consideration.</p> <p><i>A better introduction may read like this:</i></p> <p>Dear Devon Smith:</p> <p>I am writing regarding the job posting for a social media marketing assistant. I learned of this opportunity from Ed Spaniel. I am a recent graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Studies and am very excited to start my career in social media marketing.</p> <p><i>This example conveys even more information and enthusiasm:</i></p> <p>Dear Devon Smith:</p> <p>It is with sincere interest that I submit my application for the social media marketing assistant position with your company, Top Dog Media Marketing. I learned of this position from a recent conversation with Ed Spaniel of the Hilton Head Island Chamber of Commerce. In May, I will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Studies from the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB). While pursuing my degree, I worked in several positions on campus and off that utilized my social media marketing skills. I am confident my successes in these roles will enable me to be an early contributor to your team.</p>
Argument	<p>The argument* is the body of the letter where you compel the reader that you are a viable candidate for the job. It can be one or two paragraphs. Two is recommended when possible. The Purdue OWL suggests that you use your resume as the source of the information you will use in these paragraphs. You will expand on this information in the cover letter. You don't need to elaborate on everything in your resume, only on the one or two most compelling points.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">*Purdue OWL</p>	<p><i>A basic argument may read like this:</i></p> <p>In May, I will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Studies from the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB). While pursuing my degree, I worked in several positions on campus and off that utilized my social media marketing skills. I am confident my successes in these roles will enable me to be an early contributor to your team.</p> <p><i>A better argument includes two paragraphs, one that highlights your experience and another that offers positive observations about the company.</i></p> <p>As the Career Services assistant with USCB, I implemented a marketing strategy that increased student attendance to our career fair by 200%. As the Admissions Office assistant, also with USCB, I utilized my graphic design skills to create a visual marketing campaign that resulted in a 95% registration rate for new student orientations. In addition, I have a long history of working to provide exceptional customer service through the hospitality and retail industries. Plus, I have experience planning travel arrangements while I served as an administrative assistant for a top-level Mary Kay consultant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This paragraph is not only highlighting experiences but is also tying the experiences in to the position description. This position needed someone with graphic design, customer service, and travel planning skills. <p><i>This additional paragraph demonstrates that the candidate has researched the company. This is always a plus.</i></p> <p>I appreciate your organization's mission to push boundaries to serve your clients. Your 25-year history demonstrates how adaptable Top Dog Media has been to economic trends and its ability to grow through targeted acquisitions. I am seeking an organization that will provide the opportunity to develop marketing skills through a planned career path. Your first-year management training program for recent college graduates proves your organization is serious about developing new talent. I enjoy a challenge and a fast-paced environment. I can see myself thriving at your company.</p>
Closing	<p>The closing paragraph demonstrates your confidence that there will be an interview. Some candidates state that they will contact the company within a certain period, but that is not always an option.</p> <p>You may choose to invite the reader to review your resume and to contact you. It is important to state your desired outcomes in a way that demonstrates your interest in providing service to the organization.</p> <p>You should always sign the cover letter. If necessary, you can scan your signature and paste it into the letter.</p>	<p><i>A closing may read like this:</i></p> <p>The enclosed resume gives further details regarding my education and other qualifications. I look forward to a conversation where we can discuss how my skills can serve your needs. You may email or call me to set up an interview. Thank you in advance for your consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p><i>Sandy Shark</i> Sandy Shark</p> <p>enclosure</p>

[SAMPLE- Basic Cover Letter](#)

913 Tsunami Dr.
Bluffton SC 29909
(843) 244-9283

July 21, 2020

Elaine Smith
Personnel Manager (include title if possible)
Media Marketing Firm USA
1234 Shark Tank Dr.
Hilton Head Island, SC 29925

Dear Elaine Smith:

I learned from Jane Doe that your company is planning to hire a social media marketing assistant, and I am submitting the enclosed resume for your consideration.

In August, I will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Studies from the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB). While pursuing my degree, I worked in several positions on campus and off that utilized my social media marketing skills. I believe my successes in the classroom and beyond will enable me to be an early contributor to your team.

The enclosed resume will give further details regarding my education and other qualifications. I plan to contact you by phone within the next week to answer any questions and to arrange for an interview. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sandy Shark

enclosure

SAMPLE- Unique Cover Letter for a Specific Job Opportunity

913 Tsunami Dr.
Bluffton SC 29909
(843) 244-9283

July 21, 2024

Mary Smith
Personnel Manager
Top Dog Media Marketing
1234 Shark Tank Dr.
Hilton Head Island, SC 29925

Dear Mary Smith:

It is with sincere interest that I submit my application for the social media marketing assistant position with your company, Top Notch Media Marketing. I learned of this position from a recent conversation with John Doe of the Hilton Head Island Chamber of Commerce. In August, I will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Studies from the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB). While pursuing my degree, I worked in several positions on campus and off that utilized my social media marketing skills. I am confident my successes in these experiences will enable me to be an early contributor to your team.

In my most recent position as the Career Services assistant with USCB, I implemented a marketing strategy that increased student attendance to our career fair by 100%. As the Admissions Office assistant, also with USCB, I utilized my graphic design skills to create a visual marketing document for prospective students that resulted in a 60% registration rate for new student orientations. In addition, I have a long history of working to provide exceptional customer service through the hospitality and retail industries. Plus, I have experience planning travel arrangements while I served as an administrative assistant for a top-level Mary Kay consultant.

I appreciate your organization's mission to push boundaries to serve your clients. Your 25-year history demonstrates how adaptable Top-Notch Media has been to economic trends. I am seeking an organization that will provide the opportunity for me to continue to develop my marketing skills and one where experienced talent is willing to mentor new. Your first-year management training program for recent college graduates proves your organizations' willingness to do just that. I enjoy a challenge and a fast-paced environment. I can see myself thriving at your company.

The enclosed resume will give further details regarding my education and other qualifications. I look forward to a conversation where we can discuss how my skills can serve your needs. You may email or call me to set up an interview. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sandy Shark

enclosure