**Creating a Cover Letter**

**What is a Cover Letter?**

Some hiring professionals put a lot of emphasis on the cover letter and others do not. To be safe, it's a good idea to include a cover letter, whether you are faxing, emailing, or using traditional mail to deliver your resume. With our system you have the option to include a cover letter. You should carefully read each job description, because some recruiters will require it.

Your cover letter should quickly build rapport with the reader, express your enthusiasm for the job and motivate the reader to carefully consider your resume. How do you do that?

- If possible, start your cover letter with a name rather than "To Whom it May Concern". Call a receptionist if you have to, to get the name of the person who will be reading the cover letter. This will definitely set you apart from anyone who starts their letter "Dear Sir or Madam." If you can't get the name, begin with "Dear Employer". It has a more confident ring to it, without sounding pretentious.
- Throughout the letter, **focus on the needs of the prospective employer**. Your cover letter should let them know that you are the person for that job, the answer to their problems. Use the job description to help identify what their needs are.
- Display your knowledge of the company. With the internet as your research tool, you should be able to drop facts into your cover letter that show you understand the company, the product, their needs and the competition.
- Briefly state your best qualifications and achievements. Don't spend a lot of time rehashing your resume. But do include enough tidbits to keep them interested. Link these qualifications to the skills the company is seeking.
- State that you will follow up. If you politely inform the reader that you will be calling in two days to answer any questions, you'll set yourself apart from the 80-95% of other applicants who wait passively for the phone to ring.
- Keep your letter short and focused. Show respect for the limited time your reader has. Anything longer than 4 paragraphs says, "Hello. I have no idea how to prioritize my thoughts. Care to hear my life story?"
- **Don't send the same cover letter for every job; the employer will know that it is a template.** Carefully adapt the letter to the specific conditions of each job you are applying for.
- Avoid jargon and trite language.
- Use good quality stationary and have the letter typed.
- Finally, special attention should be given to grammar, spelling, and neatness. Have multiple people review it and do not rely on spell check.

Many companies will be requesting you to submit an electronic copy of a cover letter in addition to the resume. If the company makes this request, you MUST submit a letter or your resume will be automatically rejected. You can submit a cover letter by uploading it to your SmealConnect account. If you are applying through a website, make sure to have the correct contact information to submit your resume and cover letter via an email or an online application process.
Sample Cover Letter

Your present address
City, State, Zip

Date

Person’s Name
Title
Company
Address

Dear Mr. Weldon:

FIRST PARAGRAPH:
State who you are and the purpose of the letter, but take some time and think of an interesting, thought-provoking, or eye-catching introductory paragraph. If you are Name dropping, do it here. Describe your interest in the position, in the field of work, or in the organization.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH:
If you have work experience, be sure to mention pertinent data or accomplishments to show that you have specific qualifications or skills for this particular type of work. Refer to key aspects of the resume which relate to the job or employer, but don’t restate complete sections of the resume.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH:
Mention your interest in discussing the job in person and give dates when you are available. Advise that you will call on a specific date or time frame to follow up. Put your contact info (email & cell phone) in case they have any questions in the meantime. Thank them!

Sincerely,

(Handwritten signature)

Your typed name
Dear Ms. Porter:

I am currently a 6th semester marketing major at the Penn State’s Smeal College of Business. Through this letter I would like to express an interest in an account services internship with Eliot, Zizelman, & Rohn. Robin Stevens suggested that I write to indicate my interest.

I have enclosed a resume for your review which outlines my experience in the field of advertising and promotion. As an advertising salesperson for the Daily Collegian, I worked successfully with a variety of clients and with the media to design and arrange advertisements. My responsibilities in this position enhanced my skills in writing, design, promotion, marketing, and follow-through. I quickly learned to identify appropriate markets and to promote the Daily Collegian as an effective medium to reach those markets. Much of my success is due to my customer orientation, my skills in identifying client needs, and in marketing the services of my employer. I am a self-starter, persistent, and possess the ability to learn quickly. I feel these skills and experiences would be a strong addition to your firm and am excited about the prospect of putting them to work for you.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my background and qualifications and how they can be of benefit to your firm. I will contact you within the next two weeks to arrange a suitable meeting time. I am looking forward to speaking with you. If you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 555-555-5555 or abc123@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Mark E. University

Enclosure