

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

A cover letter showcases your written communication skills and may increase your chances of landing an interview

GENERAL APPEARANCE AND FORMAT

- ✓ Be sure your cover letter is no more than one page in length with consistent font size (11pt–12pt) and type (Times New Roman, Arial, Verdana, Calibri) throughout. Coordinate with your resume for a consistent feel.
- ✓ Use single spacing for each paragraph but leave blank lines between each paragraph and as appropriate to business letter format rules.
- ✓ Be genuine, professional and friendly. Use your own words. Avoid clichés, overly formal or flowery wording.
- ✓ Do NOT use a standard cover letter. Employers can tell when you change a standard letter and make it your own because they fall flat. A cover letter showcases you and the quality of work you can generate.
- ✓ Do NOT use unprofessional language (chat speak, texting language, or something shorthand).
- ✓ Always proofread your cover letter to be sure it is 100% free of grammatical and spelling errors!
- ✓ Do NOT regurgitate the information on your résumé; you may however highlight your strong points to get the reader's attention.
- ✓ Do NOT start every sentence with "I" or "My."
- ✓ Incorporate key words from the job posting into your cover letter. If they are asking you to do XYZ, talk about experience as it relates to the job posting.

GREETING

- ✓ If you can, always address the letter to an actual contact name vs. "To whom it may concern." With so much information available through LinkedIn and company websites, do the legwork to find the appropriate hiring manager's name along with the exact spelling.
- ✓ Don't assume Ms. over Mr. when it comes to gender neutral names— do your homework via networking. If appropriate prefix is unknown, use "Dear Taylor Smith:" or "Dear Alex Jones:." Do not use a prefix.
- ✓ If you cannot find a name for the hiring manager, use the format of "Dear Position Title Search Committee:" instead of "To whom it may concern:."

THE BODY (1-3 PARAGRAPHS)

- ✓ Be sure all information that was requested in the job posting is included or defined in your letter.
- ✓ **1st Paragraph:** Communicate the reason you are writing by identifying the position you are applying to, how you learned of the position and your strongest qualifications for the positions. (For entry-level, degree-related positions, your education is of particular interest.)
- ✓ **2nd Paragraph:** Communicate the reason you are interested in this position by describing how strongly your experiences, education, skills, and attributes align with the position and company needs.
 - Use the job posting along with information gathered via research and networking to articulate and market "you."
- ✓ **3rd Paragraph:** Communicate the specific reason the company should be interested in you. What makes you stand out over anyone else with the same degree and same qualifications?
- ✓ **Final Paragraph:** Express interest in an interview, refer to your resume and any applicable attachments, provide details on how you can be contacted and express appreciation for their consideration.

STILL STUCK?

Remember, a cover letter is a summary of why you are the best candidate for the position. The best candidate doesn't merely meet the basic and preferred qualifications, rather their past accomplishments and experience make them individuals that companies want to learn more about. Your cover letter should set you apart from the competition.

Does your cover letter answer the following?

- Can you do the job—is it clear you have the right skills, abilities, education and experience to be successful?
- Will you do the job—Have you shown an interest in the work itself and the right attitude, values and spirit?

SAMPLES ON THE BACK

Date

First Name Last Name
 Title
 Name of Organization
 Street Address
 City, State Zip Code

Dear First Name Last Name:

1st paragraph: Communicate the reason you are writing by identifying the position you are applying for, how you learned of the position, and your strongest qualifications for the position (For entry-level, degree-related positions, your education is of particular interest).

2nd paragraph: Communicate the reason you are interested in this position by describing how strongly your experiences, education, skills, and attributes align with the position and company needs.

- Use the job posting along with information gathered via research and networking to articulate and market “you.”

3rd paragraph: Communicate the specific reason the company should be interested in you. What makes you stand out over anyone else with the same degree and same qualifications?

4th paragraph: Express interest in an interview, refer to your resume and any applicable attachments, provide details on how you can be contacted and express appreciation for their consideration.

Sincerely,

First Name Last name

First Name Last Name
 Phone Number
 Professional Email Address

Date of Submission

Smart Marketing
 350 W Burnsville Pkwy
 Burnsville, MN 55337

Dear Position Title Search Committee:

I am writing to apply for your Marketing Internship, as found via your website. In May, 2018, I will receive a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communications from the University of North Dakota (UND). Having gained extensive knowledge in both public relations and marketing, I believe I have the skills to help Smart Marketing address its needs and best serve its customers.

My experience within the PR industry was gained through my internship at UND’s Career Services Office as their Marketing Intern. During this role, I created unique social media marketing posts and communication strategies to foster a larger audience. Additionally, I provided outreach to engage students with the web and social media content, and assisted with office events when needed. These tasks required me to efficiently work independently, as well as collaborate in a team setting, communicate effectively, and analyze various audiences and their needs.

Supplementing this experience is my education. My coursework encouraged me to “think outside the box,” all while incorporating technical knowledge of the field. For example, my capstone course required me to create an imaginary marketing plan for Amazon. In this project, I focused on the company’s dynamic culture, helping to increase student interest. As polled through a class presentation, many students found the information helpful and were interested in applying which demonstrated my ability to analyze a market and find the best means to promote an idea and/or opportunity. Having these skills will serve Smart Marketing well and increase its customer engagement and satisfaction.

As shown, my experiences and knowledge strongly correlate with what your position requires. Please feel free to contact me at 123-456-7891 or at firstname.lastname@email.com to schedule an interview at your earliest convenience. I look forward to discussing your Marketing Internship further. Thank you.

Sincerely,

First Name Last name

First Name Last Name
 Phone Number
 Professional Email Address