

Cover Letters

Cover letters are professional documents that introduce your resume. Ultimately, you have one page to convince someone to read on. But cover letters are so much more than resume introductions. A strategic cover letter is personalized and proves a match with the position, the company's goals, and the company culture. Tie your background to the company's needs. Prove the connection between your skills and the position requirements.

Prove some of your skills and qualifications for this position. Show by example that you have the skills necessary for the job. Demonstrate results and accomplishments instead of tasks. Think of a situation you encountered, the tasks you performed, your actions, and the results. Highlight any positive change you helped to produce.

Answer for your audience: How you are qualified for the position. What makes you unique as an applicant?

Cover Letter Example

Full Name
Phone number ■ Email
LinkedIn ■ Website

Month Day, Year

Name of recipient (hiring manager)
Title of recipient
Company name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Ms./Mr. Recipient,

Give a brief overview of who you are and clearly state your purpose—include the company name and the position title. Outline your professional background and your interest in the company and what they do. Make them care about you and what you can do for the company. Specify what drew you to the company—show that you've done your research and you know (or have opinions about) why that company stands out from all of the rest. What's impressive or admirable about it? Be enthusiastic! Keep this short though; you're just introducing your application.

Use the middle paragraph or two to highlight your professional background and qualifications. Be careful here: though it's tempting to inventory all accomplishments, lists don't belong here. Augment and enhance the information included in your resume through examples. Demonstrate qualifications through specific examples. Show how you worked through a problem characteristic of the prospective job. Use a short anecdote to show your skills, personality, and work ethic. Focus on what you've gained from events or unique situations that you dealt with well. Stick with information that will interest the employer, not necessarily what you're best at. Highlight skills that will be of particular interest to that job or company.

Connect your experience back to the needs of the company. What do you hope to achieve (in concord with the company's goals)? What particular qualities do you bring that would help further their goals? Show that you are the best *fit* for the position. Show that you would mesh with the company's mission, employees, and culture.

End with a brief and polite closing. Indicate continued interest, but do not be too pushy. Thank them for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your full name

Commented [CSCoC1]: Match header to the resume to create a cohesive package.
Include contact information.

Commented [CSCoC2]: Date you send out application.

Commented [CSCoC3]: If you don't know gender put full name (first and last). If you can't find a name, address it to the person's job title. "Dear sir or madam" or "To whom it may concern" are antiquated and lazy.

Commented [CSCoC4]: If emailing, 2 lines between your name and the salutation. If mailing, 4 lines and sign above your name in a dark ink.

Sample Cover Letter

Donna Meagle

(617) 353-3490 * dmeagle@bu.edu
[linkedin.com/in/donnameagle](https://www.linkedin.com/in/donnameagle)

Melissa Morris
LaForce + Stevens
41 East 11th Street
6th Floor
New York, NY 10003

Dear Ms. Morris,

I am writing to apply to the Spring 2016 public relations internship at LaForce + Stevens. The agency's innovative digital branding strategies, especially for high-end fashion clients, are redefining the industry, particularly in its work with Perry Ellis. My experience in public relations and background in fashion design would make me a great fit for the fast-paced LaForce + Stevens team.

An account executive at PRLab at Boston University, I created a social media strategy for my client Ben & Jerry's. I collaborated with other account executives to integrate innovative ideas into our online brand conversations to engage potential and existing followers. Throughout the semester, we have increased social media followers by 45% and engaged the community—especially the thousands of Boston-area students—in the brand through traditional and social media. In addition, I built a media list for Ben & Jerry's of contacts in local, college, and national media to gain more earned coverage for the brand. So far, two local papers have published articles based on the press kit I assembled and pitches I wrote to journalists.

On the other hand, I have been designing and making clothes for years, in class and on my own. I understand the demands of the fashion industry and have the keen sense of style necessary to create brand strategies that compellingly represent high-end fashion brands. From my public relations experience and background in fashion, I would be an enthusiastic, creative asset to the public relations department here.

I look forward to talking to you further about my skills and qualifications for the spring 2016 public relations internship at LaForce + Stevens. I can be reached by phone at (617) 353-3490 and email at dmeagle@bu.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Donna Meagle

Email & Cover Letters

You'll be submitting many applications via email. You've written a beautiful cover letter and have an awesome resume. But now you're faced with the blank body of an email.

Basically, this email is just to make sure your info ends up in the right pile (i.e. not the trash).

Address it to the hiring manager

If you're supposed to email jobs@bigcompany.com, send the application there, but include the name of the hiring manager—whoever you addressed your cover letter to.

Keep it formal

Be polite and courteous.

Keep it short

Elaborate explanations and introductions don't belong here. Two sentences is plenty; three is more than enough.

Include the job title in the email body and subject

Make sure the application ends up in the right folder. Tell them how (file format) and where (attached) they'll find the important docs (resume + cover letter).

Include your contact info and name

Put your name and contact info in the body of the email and the email signature.

That's it. Let your resume and cover letter speak for themselves.

Here's an example:

Dear Ms. Hiring-Manager,

I am pleased to submit my application for the account associate position at Big Ads Firm. My resume and cover letter are attached in a PDF. Please contact me at myemail@bu.edu if there is a problem with the file.

Thank you for your consideration,

Hopeful Applicant

Hopeful Applicant
myemail@bu.edu
617-753-27363
Linkedin.com/in/hopefulapplicant

Cover Letter Checklist

Before sending out your cover letter, always double (and triple) check to make sure everything is accurate, true, grammatical, spelled correctly, and the best representation of you for that position. Use this checklist to ensure you have the basics for a good application.

FORMATTING & LAYOUT

- My cover letter is 1 page or less.
- My name is at the top, big, bold, and clear.
- My text is between sizes 10-12.
- My text is legible in a readable font.
- My margins are balanced and between 0.5-1 inch wide.
- My cover letter is organized and easy to read.
- My header matches the resume header, and includes my name and contact info.
- I include the name, job title, and address of the hiring manager.
- I address the letter "Dear Mr./Ms. [Hiring Manager's name]."
- If I don't know their gender, address the letter "Dear [First + Last Name]."
- I sign off cordially and formally with "Sincerely."

WRITING & EDITING

- Everything is spelled correctly.
- Industry specific words are spelled correctly according to each company's preferences. (Is Communication supposed to have an "s"?)
- Everything is in the active voice.
- I use strong action verbs.
- My writing is clear and illustrative.
- I write to my audience (i.e. the hiring manager).
- My writing is confident and engaging in a professional tone.
- My cover letter is skimmable—you can discern my experience in 30 seconds or less.
- It's short—between 200 and 350 words for the main text.

CONTENT

- I include the job title and company name in the body of the letter.
- I show interest in the company's work and goals.
- The skills and experience I present match the employer's requirements.
- I omit information and positions not related to my application.
- I do not repeat, rehash, or summarize my resume.
- I expand upon my resume through anecdotes, examples, or short narratives.
- I anticipate and answer potential questions the hiring manager may have.
- I show accomplishments and results, not just tasks.
- I focus on what I can do for the company, not what they can do for me.
- Everything included is a true and positive representation of me.
- All dates and locations are accurate.
- I clearly state what I hope to gain from the process (job, industry connection, informational interview) and indicate a desire to move forward in the process.