

COVER LETTERS

Including a cover letter in any application is essential. The only time it is acceptable to NOT include a cover letter is if the employer specifically tells you not to include one. Cover letters that are written in application of a specific position are referred to as “letters of application” while letters written to inquire about opportunities within an organization are referred to as “letters of inquiry”. Both types of letters should follow the general guidelines provided below and seek to achieve the following goals:

Convince the employer that you:

1. Would be a good match with what they are looking for and will add value to their organization (SKILLS!)
2. Have done your research and really feel like this job and this organization are the right fit for you (PERSONALITY!)

COVER LETTER CONTENT

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

- Briefly explain who you are and why you are writing. Mention the specific position title and how you heard about the position.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the organization and why you are interested in working there (avoid generic reasons).
- If you have a connection at the organization or have been referred, mention that person’s name and their connection to you.

BODY PARAGRAPH

- Illustrate how your qualifications and skills match the organization’s needs (use the job description as a guide)
- Choose one or two key experiences that exemplify your qualifications for the position and provide examples or very short stories that provide details about your abilities, strengths, and skills (avoid repeating your resume verbatim). Be sure to connect these experiences back to the position and explain what you can bring to the organization.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

- Summarize your fit with the organization.
- Indicate action – state that you will follow up in 2 weeks (if you state that, you MUST actually follow up).
- Refer to your enclosed resume and restate your contact information (phone and e-mail).
- Express your appreciation for their time and consideration.
- Always make sure you sign your letter! If submitting/sending your cover letter electronically be sure to attach your cover letter as a PDF file and do not leave a space for a handwritten signature.

COVER LETTER TIPS

Target each and every letter to the specific position and organization. Never send out generic or form letters. Write to a person! Show your individuality, fit, and that you know something about this organization and this position. Make each and every letter count!

Write professionally. Employers will use this as a writing sample. Do not use contractions (don’t, I’ve, etc.). Avoid acronyms and jargon.

Always get a name! Never address a letter “To Whom It May Concern”. Do some research and find a name if it is not readily given. Use LinkedIn, look for employee directories on the website, or talk to a current employee. You can always call and ask who to address the letter to if necessary.

Focus on what YOU can do for THEM, not what they can do for you. Convey how hiring you will benefit the organization.

Make sure it is perfect! Proofread it and have others look it over. There can be no errors!

Keep it to 1 page and use font between 10-12pt. Employers see hundreds of letters. They will not read anything longer than a page.

Use a standard font that matches the font on your resume and high-quality paper that also matches your resume. All of your application materials should look like they belong together. Avoid fonts that are overly unique or difficult to read. You want to keep it professional, but you can also explore options beyond Times New Roman.

Include an “Enclosure” notation at the bottom of your letter to inform the reader that you are enclosing additional materials (e.g. resume).

ALWAYS FOLLOW UP!
After you submit your cover letter you MUST follow up with the organization within 2-3 weeks to reiterate your interest in the position, confirm that they received your materials, and check on the status of your application. This can be in the form of an e-mail or a phone call.

SAMPLE COVER LETTERS ON THE BACK!

Lucy Johnson

johnsonl@gmail.com | (555)555-5555 476
E. Fender Lane, Morgantown, WV 40536

February 12, 2016

Damon Smith
Director of Human Resources
Crimson Fitness and Wellness, Inc.
6745 Steamer Drive, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60111

Dear Mr. Smith,

Please consider my application for the Wellness Coach position with Crimson Fitness and Wellness. I learned about this position opening from Sam Taylor, one of your current Wellness Coaches. I believe that my strong Fitness background, ACE certification, and hands on experience will allow me to contribute greatly to the Crimson team.

I understand that the primary focus of Crimson Wellness Coaches is their individual and class coaching programs. This past year I completed an internship with Body Fitness in Minneapolis, MN where I gained experience in both of these areas. At Body Fitness I had the opportunity to work with a variety of clients in both one-on-one and larger class settings. I developed an entirely new fitness class program, marketed it, and assisted in the facilitation. The new program's attendance surpassed past program attendance records within the first 3 months of its start date. In addition to developing the entirely new program, I also collaborated with a team of 3 on the design of a new assessment and prescription exercise system which is currently being used by Body Fitness.

Additionally, I am currently serving as the President of the Student Association of Public Health at West Virginia University. In this role I have been able to hone my leadership skills. As the President, I have contributed to a 10% increase in the organization's membership and have successfully planned and implemented eight educational and social programs for Public Health students in collaboration with my executive team of three. I also have had years of customer service experience which will translate well into the customer service aspects of being a Crimson Wellness Coach.

Fitness is my passion and I would love to bring that passion to Crimson Fitness and Wellness. I believe that my education, skills and experience make me an excellent candidate for the Wellness Coach position. Enclosed is my resume that further outlines my education and work experience. Should you have any questions, please call me at (555)555-5555 or e-mail me at johnsonl@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you and will follow up in two weeks to check on the status of my application. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lucy Johnson

Lucy Johnson

Enclosure

441 Sunset Lane
Morgantown, WV 40536

August 19, 2014

Mark McDonald
Director, Human Resources
Smash Public Relations
848 N. Mercer St.
Indianapolis, IN 46205

Dear Mr. McDonald:

I am writing to apply for the position of Event Planner which was advertised through the West Virginia University Career Services page. Through several recent articles in The Indianapolis Business Journal, I have learned about the rapid growth and success of Smash Public Relations in this area, and I would like to know more about your organization's unique approach to promotions and publicity. I am interested in joining your staff and making immediate, creative contributions.

My interest in public relations began when I served as the Events Intern for the Summer Arts Fair in Morgantown, WV. This position required great attention to detail, as I was responsible for organizing and executing an event that annually attracts more than 60,000 people. In collaboration with two other interns, I managed an advertising budget of \$7,000, recruited over 150 food and craft vendors, and designed security plans to ensure the safety of guests at the event. At a second internship with Producer Events in Chicago, IL, I observed account representatives making presentations to large and small clients and co-presented a public relations campaign for a local boutique which was ultimately adopted by the client.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my two public relations internships and I believe these experiences, as well as my coursework and my various leadership experiences in college, have prepared me to be a successful Event Planner at Smash Public Relations. I have enclosed my resume for your review. I will contact you within the next two weeks to check on the status of my application. If you wish to reach me prior to that time, please call me at (555)555-5555 or e-mail me at Rae_Mathers@gmail.com. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rae Mathers

Rae Mathers

Enclosure

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