

WRITING PROFESSIONAL APPLICATION LETTERS

adapted from SIUC Career Services, "Composing A Cover Letter" and Mike Markel's *Technical Communication: Situations and Strategies*

Tips for Writing a Cover or Inquiry Letter:

- ✓ Use business letter format. (Single-space with double spaces between paragraphs. Include inside address information—the name, title, organization, and address of the recipient in the left hand corner of the page.)
- ✓ Research the employer's organization and personalize each letter. This indicates that you know something about the company and that you are interested in the employer.
- ✓ Keep your cover letter brief. In most cases, the cover letter should fill the better part of a page. For more experienced candidates, the letter may be longer, but most students find that they can adequately describe their credentials in one page. Be sure not to waste the reader's time.
- ✓ Use a polite, formal style, which demonstrates both self-confidence and respect for the employer. Be clear, objective, and persuasive.
- ✓ Briefly highlight one or two of your most significant accomplishments or abilities to show you are an above average candidate.
- ✓ Use powerful action verbs to hold the employer's interest and convey a sense of energy and enthusiasm.
- ✓ Group similar items together in a paragraph and then organize the paragraphs to relate logically. Use strong topic sentences to tie information together in an organized fashion.
- ✓ Close the letter with a plan for follow-up action. Ask for an interview to further discuss your qualifications for the position.
- ✓ Include an enclosure notation to indicate that your résumé follows the letter.
- ✓ Thank the reader for their time in reading your letter and résumé and for considering you as an applicant.
- ✓ Proofread and sign your letter.
- ✓ When unsure if a position is available, write describing the type of job you would be interested in and offer yourself for an interview. Include your résumé as you would in any application letter.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FORMAT

Your street address
City, State Zip
Date

Name
Title
Company
Street Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr./Ms:

1st paragraph—Explain why you are writing; identify the position and your source of information. Indicate in summary form your strongest qualifications for the position using a series of phrases.

2nd paragraph—Outline your strongest qualifications in more detail and show how they match the position requirements. As much as possible, provide evidence of your related work, extracurricular, and academic experiences and accomplishments. Refer to your enclosed résumé.

3rd paragraph—Optional. Convince the employer that you have the personal qualities and motivation to succeed. Relate your interests and qualities to your knowledge of the company.

4th paragraph—Request an interview and indicate how and when you can be contacted. Suggest that you will call at a specific time to discuss interview possibilities. Thank the reader for his/her consideration.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten signature)

Your name typed

Enclosure

Nita Jobe

1234 Someplace Street • Carbondale, IL 62901 • 555-555-5555 • njob@msn.com

July 17, 1999

Ms. Jane Doe
Manager, Marketing Department
Consumer Goods Inc.
8910 Nowhere Drive
St. Louis, MO 63101

Dear Ms. Doe:

Please find my résumé enclosed in response to the advertisement in *Career Grapevine* on July 21, 1999, for an account executive. The position appears to fit very well with my education and career interests.

As my résumé indicates, my background has included various marketing experiences. As a part-time sales representative for the *DailyEgyptian*, I handled accounts for numerous departments on campus. In addition, I was responsible for the marketing of two major ad campaigns including special olympics and the Red Cross blood drive. Finally, during my internship last summer at Walt Disney World, I achieved superior marketing skills while assisting customers in various areas of the MGM Studio.

I know that consumer goods is the leader in the industry. A recent article in the June 5th issue of *Business Week* indicated that your company continues to outperform the competition in the development of innovative marketing techniques, while continuing to be responsive to your customers' needs. I am extremely excited about the position at consumer goods and believe that with my education and experience, I can make a major contribution to your company.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss your needs and my qualifications in detail and will contact you the week of August 2 to see if we can arrange a meeting at your convenience. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 555-555-5555 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Nita Jobe
Enclosure

522 Beethoven Drive
Roanoke, Virginia 24017
November 15, 1999

Miss Cecilia Smathers
Vice-President, Dealer Sales
Hamilton Office Machines, Inc.
6194 Main Street
Hampton, Virginia 23661

Dear Miss Smathers:

During the recent NOMAD convention in Washington, a member of your sales staff, Mr. Dale Jarrett, informed me of a possible opening for a Manager in your Dealer Sales Division. My extensive background in the office machine industry, I believe, makes me highly qualified for the position.

I was with Technology, Inc., Dealer Division from its formation in 1969 to its phase-out last year. During this period, I was involved in all areas of dealer sales, both within Technology Inc., and through personal contact with a number of independent dealers. Between 1967 and 1969, I served as Assistant to the Dealer Sales Manager as a Special Representative. My education and work experience are contained in the enclosed résumé.

May I have an appointment for an interview with you to discuss my qualifications in detail? Please write to me at my home or telephone me at (703) 449-6743 any weekday.

Sincerely,

Gregory Mingukakis

Enclosure: Résumé