

Cover Letter Guide



Office: Pappajohn Center 115
Phone: 641-422-4292

The Purpose of a Cover Letter is...

- To tell the employer what type of position you are seeking and support your resume objective.
- To entice the employer to learn more about you by reading your resume.
- To impress the employer by showcasing your knowledge about the company and/or its goals.
- To show the employer how well you can express yourself.

Getting Started...

Address the letter to a specific individual. Use online company directories or contact the company and ask for the name and title of the hiring manager for the position you are applying for.

Write an attention -getting introduction. Remember, you are trying to entice the reader to want to get to know you better, and ultimately hire you.

State the position you are applying for and point out your relevant qualifications. Do not merely repeat the contents of your resume. Select specific experiences relevant to the job and discuss them. Fill in the blanks your resume leaves open. Tell the employer why you are uniquely qualified for the job. Avoid using "I" to start every sentence.

Tailor your letters to the needs of the company and the requirements of the position. How will the employer benefit from hiring you? Want ads and company publications offer clues about what to stress. Get inside information about workings of your chosen industry and let them know that you are aware of—and possess— exactly what it is they are looking for.

Always send a cover letter with your resume. Your cover letter does not need to exceed one page.

Don't forget to sound positive and confident!

The Structure of the Cover Letter

Current Date **Top Margin set at 1.5 inches (4 returns)**

Contact Person's Name & Title
Company Name
Company Address
City, State Zip Code **(2 returns)**

Dear Mr. Employer: **(2 returns)**

The opening paragraph should state why you are writing and why you are interested in the organization. Include the name of the position you are applying for and how you became aware of the vacancy. If a former employer or someone referred you to the employer, this is the best place to drop that person's name and mention that he or she suggested you write. **(2 returns)**

The second paragraph is where you draw attention to your resume and highlight specific skills relevant to the potential employer. This paragraph is devoted to explaining your qualifications. Include achievements and qualifications related to the position desired. If you have qualifications that are not noted on your resume, this is your opportunity to discuss them. **(2 returns)**

The third paragraph states why you are right for the job. Use this to demonstrate your knowledge of the employer and their goals. Tell them why you should be considered for the position you are applying for. A little bit of homework on the company or the industry can really pay off by showing the employer you are serious about your application, and informed about the type of work and experience that is required. If you are a new graduate, this may be included in your second paragraph. **(2 returns)**

The closing paragraph is used to request an interview in a manner that suits your style and takes into consideration the company and the kind of job for which you are applying. End the letter by thanking the person for their consideration. **(2 returns)**

Sincerely, **(4 returns)**

Your Signature Here

Your Name (typewritten)
Your Address
City, State Zip Code
Telephone Number (with area code)
E-mail **(2 returns)**

Enclosure (s) (this indicates that your resume and/or additional materials are enclosed)

Sample: Response to Advertisement

February 11, 20xx

Ms. Martha Jones, Manager
American Mutual Life
904 Liberty Building
6th and Grand
Des Moines, Iowa 50307

Dear Ms. Jones:

I am writing to apply for the position of Administrative Assistant as advertised in the Kensington Ledger on May 25th..

For the past year, I have worked as an Administrative Assistant in Royer's Hospital in downtown Kensington. My responsibilities are diverse and include receptionist duties, bookkeeping, word processing, and file management.

At the end of this month, I will graduate from Kensington Community College with a degree in Administrative Office Specialist. I would like to use my skills acquired at Royer's combined with my degree from Kensington, in an interesting, challenging position.

Enclosed is my resume. It details the skills I could bring to American Mutual Life in the position of Administrative Assistant. I look forward to hearing from you and exploring this opportunity further. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John L Bach

John L. Bach
7842 South East 18th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50320
(515) 285-6945
jbach@isp.com

Enclosure

Sample: Response to Blind Advertisement

February 11, 20xx

R# 172
Globe Gazette
315 West State
Mason City, Iowa 50401

RE: Customer Service Position

I am writing in response to the employment advertisement your company placed in the Globe Gazette for a Customer Service Employee. Please accept this letter and the enclosed resume as my application for employment.

Having worked directly with customers in person and on the telephone for the last two years, I know how important good communication skills are. I can deal with people in a friendly, direct and efficient manner in a variety of situations.

I would appreciate an opportunity to arrange an appointment with you at your earliest convenience to discuss my qualifications. You can contact me at the phone number listed below or by leaving a message at 641-243-1110. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Judith M. Todd

Judith M. Todd
3658 Cutler Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50312
515-287-8810
Judithtodd@isp.com

Enclosure

Sample: Collection of applications is with Iowa Workforce Development

July 5, 20xx

Iowa Workforce Development
600 South Pierce
Mason City, Iowa 50401

RE: Customer Service Position

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the position your company listed with Iowa Workforce Development for a Customer Service Representative, job order number IA 8341547. Please accept this letter and the enclosed resume as my application for this position.

Having worked directly with customers in person and on the telephone for the past two years, I know how important good communication skills are. I can deal with people in a friendly, direct and efficient manner in a variety of situations. I received the "Customer Service of the Year Award" for 2007 as a result of my demonstrated customer service skills.

I would appreciate an opportunity to arrange an appointment with you at your earliest convenience to discuss my qualifications. You can contact me at the telephone number or email address listed below. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Ina M. Working

Ina M Working
123 Main Street
Mason City, Iowa 50401
641-555-5627
inaworking@isp.com

Enclosure

Sample: Response to Telephone Call

January 11, 20xx

Mr. Charles Lee, Human Resources Manager
National Life Insurance Company
1400 Collins Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Dear Mr. Lee:

Thank you for the opportunity you gave me to discuss my employment interests with you on the telephone today. I would like to apply for the position of receptionist with National Life Insurance Company. As you requested, enclosed is my resume for you to review.

Since I have previous experience in a business office, I am familiar with office routine and know that a receptionist must be courteous and efficient. I am eager to put my skills to work for you.

I would appreciate the opportunity to arrange an appointment with you to discuss my qualifications, and look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Patricia M. Simmons

Patricia M. Simmons
3200 Des Moines Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50317
(515) 289-8810
psimmons@isp.com

Enclosure

Sample: Referral Letter

February 11, 20xx

Jane Employer, Manager
ABC Company
123 4th Street
Mason City, Iowa 50401

Dear Ms. Employer:

Gary Smith suggested I contact you regarding a Customer Service Representative position. Please accept this letter and the enclosed resume as my application for employment.

Having worked directly with customers in person and on the telephone for the last two years, I know how important good communication skills are. I can deal with people in a friendly, direct, and efficient manner in a variety of situations.

I would appreciate an opportunity to arrange an appointment with you at your earliest convenience to discuss my qualifications. You can contact me at the phone number listed below or by leaving a message at (641) 243-1110. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Judith M. Todd

Judith M. Todd
3658 Cutler Avenue
Charles City, Iowa 50616
(641) 228-0000

Enclosure

Thank you letter: Layout & Content

Current Date Top margin at 1.5 inches down (4 returns)

Contact Person's Name
Company Name
Company Address
City, State. Zip code **(2 returns)**

Dear Contact Person's Name: **(2 returns)**

Express your thanks for the interview referring to the date and position which you interviewed.
(2 returns)

Use the second paragraph to stress your qualifications. The purpose of this letter is to remind the employer who you are and to reinforce or expand the positive image you want to project.
(2 returns)

Close your letter by anticipating further contact. **(2 returns)**

Sincerely, **(4 returns)**

Sign Here

Your name (typed)
Your Address
City, State zip code
Telephone number (with area code)
Email

Sample: Thank You Letter

February 12, 20xx

Ms. Martha Jones, Human Resource Manager
American Mutual Life
904 Liberty Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50307

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview for the computer operation position currently available with American Mutual Life on February 11, 2008.

After listening to you, learning more about your company and the position, I am very confident about my ability to perform the job. Of particular interest was your emphasis on an employee's ability to work independently and their willingness to learn new skills that will benefit the company. My work history shows I am that kind of person, and I feel that these are important characteristics of a good employee.

I am anxiously awaiting your decision and the opportunity to put my training and skills to work for your company.

Sincerely, **(4 returns)**

John L. Bach

John L Bach
7842 South East 18th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50320
515-285-6945
johnbach@yahoo.com