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Cover Letters

Top 5 things recruiters look for in a cover letter

- ***readability***
- ***a sense of your personality and attitude***
- ***how you found out about the job opening***
- ***your educational and experiential accomplishments***
- ***evidence that you've researched the company***

Many times, even the resume makes a second impression behind the cover letter. That "oh so critical" first impression is made by the letter that introduces the resume – the cover letter. So, a cover letter can be just as important and as powerful as your resume. When the envelope is opened, your cover letter is the first thing seen. It can make an indelible first impression, it can set the tone for your candidacy, and it can earn your resume the careful examination it deserves. A good cover letter sets the stage for the reader to accept your resume as something worth serious attention.

Your first step is to grab your reader's attention. You do this with the appearance of your letter: the type is large and legible enough for others to read, it is completely free of misspellings, and it is well laid out so that it is easy on the eye, and if that letter is going by mail, rather than e-mail, you grab attention by using quality stationery, including envelopes.

Your second step is to generate interest with the letter's content. The first opportunity you have to do this is by addressing the letter to someone by name. The cover letter offers you an opportunity to personalize and target your resume to a particular reader. This is critical, since resumes are impersonal. Without a personalized cover letter, a resume may create the impression that the addressee is simply part of a mass mailing. Find out who will be the first in line to evaluate your application materials or better yet, address your letter to the stakeholder in this hiring process – the person who is responsible for hiring the right person for the job or who will have the final say as to who is hired. This may take some investigation and research work, but it is well worth your while.

Important guidelines for writing powerfully effective letters are to have something of interest to communicate to the reader and to deliver that message with passion and enthusiasm.

Again, know your skills! With a targeted letter, the first step is to identify your skills and marketable attributes. Think of your letter in terms of your reader's interests. Show them something you have to offer that will benefit them. You will get the interview or advance to the next step if you meet the prospective company's "criteria or needs for hire." Make the connection between those needs and your skills and experiences, giving evidence that you are capable of making a contribution and bringing value to the company. Give them genuine reasons why you want to work for the company. This means more research and investigation on your end, but, again, well worth your while.

The following pages provide a basic template and numerous examples of excellent and effective resumes of students just like you. None of these resources are proprietary, so feel free to use any formatting and/or text you wish. Refer to the list of "Action" verbs at the end of the guide to use for your work and project experience bullets.

Please consider making an appointment with a Career Services Career Advisor for a personal one-on-one resume review. Call 906-487-2313 or email career.mtu.edu.

**Basic Cover Letter
Resume Format
Business Block Style**

Your Street
Your Town, State, Zip

Date

(space)

(sp)

(sp)

(sp)

Name of Contact (Hiring Stakeholder)

Title

Company

Address

Address

(sp)

Dear Hiring Stakeholder: (If you cannot find a contact name, use Dear Sir/Madame:)

(sp)

First Paragraph: Immediately tell your reader why you're writing. Be sure to fully describe the employment opportunity, along with how you found out about it. The first paragraph should ignite interest in your candidacy and spark enthusiasm from the reader. What can you do for him or her in general terms.

(sp)

Second Paragraph: Give your reader your background. Go more in depth about your experiences, education, skills, and abilities. Also, build a bridge between those details and what the company needs. Tell you reader what you can offer the company with as specific and focused evidence as possible.

(sp)

Third Paragraph: Show evidence that you've researched the company and explain why you want to work for them.

(sp)

Closing Paragraph: Let your reader know that you've included your resume for their review. Then, suggest some follow up action. You might ask for an interview, let them know you'll follow up with a phone call to speak further about the opportunity, your qualifications, or scheduling an interview. If you're sending your application materials electronically, you may want to suggest a follow up phone call to ensure your documents were received. Then, of course, thank your reader for their time and consideration.

(sp)

Sincerely,

(sp)

(sp)

(sp)

(sp)

Your Name

Enclosure/Attachment

1234 Townsend Drive
Houghton, MI 49931
April 7, 2011

International Conservation Service
Midwest Region Office
123 Opportunity Drive
Out of Town, MI 12345

RE: Ann. # MWRO-08-MP-0043

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am writing to apply for the position of GIS/Remote Sensing Specialist position in the Great Lakes Network (GLKN) as advertised in announcement #MWRO-08-MP-0043. This position came to my attention through Mike Smith, a previous supervisor and the GIS Analyst / Lecturer in Michigan Technological University's (MTU) School of Forest Resources and Environmental Science (SFRES). I am currently finishing up my senior year as an Applied Ecology and Environmental Science major at MTU. The following list highlights my skills that I believe will allow me to make an immediate and valuable contribution to the International Conservation Service:

- **GIS/Remote Sensing Experience** – I have completed both an Intro to GIS course and a master's level GIS course in addition to an Independent Study in GIS/Remote Sensing. I have worked on several GIS projects including ortho-rectifying aerial photos from the 1940's for GLKN in addition to being the GIS analyst on my Integrated Resource Assessment (Senior Design/Capstone) team.
- **Stand Survey Design** - Accustomed to obtaining a list of stands that need surveys and creating the protocol and procedure myself. In addition, I am familiar with many different survey strategies and methods.
- **Communication and Interpersonal Skills** – I am currently a Teaching Assistant for Introduction to GIS for Natural Resource Management and have previously been a tour guide for the Michigan Tech Admissions Department.

My interest in GIS/remote sensing stems from my coursework at MTU, where I developed an appreciation for the necessity of accurate GIS/remote sensing analysis in the greater natural resources fields. I especially came to this conclusion when I was attempting to integrate my two primary interests of wetlands and fire caused disturbance. At some point in the future, I would like to pursue a graduate degree looking at the interactions between wetlands and fire. As such, I believe that strengthening my understanding of GIS/remote sensing, not only in my areas of interest but also in natural resources as a whole, will greatly aid me in my future research.

I have attached my resume for your perusal and ask for the opportunity to interview with you at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

John Doe
Attachment

1234 Townsend Drive
Houghton, MI 49931
February 1, 2011

Mr. John A. Smith, CEO
The Best Care Hospital
123 Opportunity Drive
Out of Town, MI 12345

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am writing to apply for the Biomedical Engineering Intern position at Best Care Hospital. I heard about this opening from Dr. Michael Neuman, my department chair at Michigan Technological University. I believe my academic background and my engineering work experience make me an excellent fit for this position. I know my skills and my character will allow me to help The Best Care Hospital achieve its health care goals.

I have experience working on several team biomedical engineering design projects, including work with the Consumer Product Manufacturing Enterprise. I am currently working on a year-long senior design project focused on cardiac flow measurements around stent struts using particle imaging velocimetry systems. I have had the experience of communicating with a company as to its needs, applying my engineering knowledge and skills to the project's design, building, testing, and redesigning, and seeing the project through to a successful outcome.

I have held several leadership roles on Michigan Tech's campus, including membership in the Society for Biomaterials, Interfraternity Council Philanthropy Committee Chair, and numerous leadership positions within Alpha Gamma Delta International Women's Fraternity. This campus community experience honed my leadership and communications skills and has made me a great team player.

My resume is enclosed for more details concerning my education and experience. (I will call you shortly to ensure you received my application materials.) I am excited about this career opportunity and would appreciate the opportunity to interview with you at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe
Encl.

1400 Townsend Drive
Houghton, Michigan 49931
February 21, 2011

Jane Doe
Copper Co.
444 Mine Drive
Coppertown, WI 55555

Dear Ms. Doe:

I am writing to apply for an internship/co-op position currently available at Copper Co. I learned of this opportunity when I spoke with your company's representative at the Michigan Technological University Career Fair on February 19. I believe my academic background and my great desire to apply my engineering fundamental knowledge to industrial projects makes me an excellent candidate for this position. I know my character and experience will allow me to make an immediate contribution to the technical needs of Copper Co., thus helping Copper Co. meets its goals.

I am currently studying to earn a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. Although my work experience is limited, I am having a successful academic experience. I am eager to compliment my education with hands-on, real world, technical work. My engineering courses have allowed me to work with other engineering students to plan, design, build, test, and then redesign mechanical devices, taking a project from start to successful finish.

I have included my resume for your perusal. I am excited about the opportunity to work at Copper Co. in an intern or co-op position, and I am happy to speak with you further about how I may fit your needs. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

John Smith
Enclosure

1234 Townsend Drive
Houghton, MI 49931
April 11, 2012

Mr. Bob d'Builder
Project Engineer
Healthy Pharmaceuticals
100 Anywhere Avenue
St. Paul, MN 44444

Dear Mr. d'Builder:

I am writing to tell you of my great interest in pursuing a summer Chemical Engineering internship with Healthy Pharmaceuticals in the St. Paul area. I believe that my academic background and engineering project experience make me an excellent candidate for this kind of position.

I am currently studying to earn my B.S. in Chemical Engineering from Michigan Technological University. I thoroughly enjoy my course work and appreciate my academic success, but am eager to apply what I have learned to a hands-on industry experience. Having grown up in the twin cities area, I know that Healthy Pharmaceuticals is a global leader in the design, development, and manufacturing of a vast and varied array of products. For this reason, I am truly excited to ask for the opportunity to contribute to your company. My collegiate education and passion to broaden my chemical engineering experience make me a great fit with your company.

I have enclosed my resume for your review and request an interview with you at your earliest convenience. I will contact you in 3-4 business days to discuss a possible interview. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe
Encl.

Action Verbs for Resumes and Cover Letters

Management Skills:

Administered
Analyzed
Assigned
Attained
Chaired
Consolidated
Contracted
Coordinated
Delegated
Developed
Directed
Evaluated
Executed
Improved
Increased
Organized
Oversaw
Planned
Prioritized
Produced
Recommended
Reviewed
Scheduled
Strengthened
Supervised

Communication Skills

Addressed
Arbitrated
Arranged
Authored
Collaborated
Convinced
Corresponded
Developed
Directed
Drafted
Edited
Enlisted
Formulated
Influenced
Interpreted
Lectured
Mediated
Moderated
Negotiated
Persuaded
Promoted
Publicized
Reconciled
Recruited
Spoke
Translated
Wrote

Research Skills

Clarified
Collected
Critiqued
Diagnosed
Evaluated
Examined
Extracted
Identified
Inspected
Interpreted
Interviewed
Investigated
Organized
Reviewed
Summarized
Surveyed
Systematized

Technical Skills

Assembled
Built
Calculated
Computed
Configured
Designed
Devised
Engineered
Fabricated
Installed
Maintained
Operated
Overhauled
Performed
Trouble-shooting
Programmed
Remodeled
Repaired
Retrieved
Solved
Upgraded

Teaching Skills

Adapted
Advised
Clarified
Coached
Communicated
Coordinated
Demystified
Developed
Enabled
Encouraged
Evaluated

Teaching Skills (Continued)

Explained
Facilitated
Guided
Informed
Instructed
Persuaded
Set goals
Stimulated
Trained

Clerical/Detail Skills

Approved
Arranged
Catalogued
Classified
Collected
Compiled
Executed
Generated
Implemented
Inspected
Monitored
Operated
Organized
Prepared
Processed
Purchased
Recorded
Retrieved
Screened
Specified
Systematized
Tabulated
Validated

Helping Skills

Assessed
Assisted
Clarified
Coached
Counseled
Demonstrated
Diagnosed
Educated
Expedited
Facilitated
Guided
Motivated
Referred
Rehabilitated
Represented

Financial Skills

Administered
Allocated
Analyzed
Appraised
Audited
Balanced
Calculated
Computed
Developed
Forecasted
Managed
Marketed
Planned
Projected
Researched

Creative Skills

Acted
Conceptualized
Created
Customized
Designed
Developed
Directed
Established
Fashioned
Founded
Illustrated
Initiated
Instituted
Integrated
Introduced
Invented
Originated
Performed
Planned
Revitalized
Shaped

More Verbs

Achieved
Expanded
Improved
Pioneered
Reduced
(losses)
Resolved
(problems)
Restored
Spearheaded
Transformed



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Career Services Offers:

- MyPlan: on-line assessment tool to help identify your interests and strengths and the right degree and career for you.
- HuskyJOBS – your one-stop-shop for all jobs – corporate internships, co-ops and full-time positions and part-time on-campus and community jobs.
- Personal, one-on-one advising:
 - Job search strategies
 - Resumes and Cover Letters, CV's and POS/SOPs
 - Interview Skills
 - Networking Skills
 - Career Fair Prep
- Campus-wide Career Development Education seminars, conferences and presentations
- UN 2525 Career Development Course
- Bi-annual Career Fairs
- Corporate information sessions
- On-campus corporate interviews
- Internship and Co-op opportunities
- Business and Dining Etiquette Dinner

Call us at 487-2313 for a one-on-one career advising appointment

Visit our website www.career.mtu.edu for additional information

Also at Career Services:

- Interview Rooms
- Computers and Printers
- Friendly and Helpful Staff

Remember...If you are uncertain about your future or current career path, consider utilizing "MyPlan." It's a Career and Educational Planning System FREE to Michigan Tech students. Make sure you check "share results with career advisor," and make an appointment for a one-on-one meeting with a Career Services Career Advisor to help you analyze your results and discuss your future plans.