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WRITING EFFECTIVE COVER LETTERS



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MACALESTER



COVER LETTERS

In addition to resumes or CVs, employers will often ask applicants to include a cover letter or job application letter. A cover letter is a critical piece of writing that will give you the chance to better describe your skills and directly address your potential employer.

This Guide will help you to:

- Identify when cover letters are necessary
- Start writing using effective strategies
- Format and edit your drafts
- Revise and troubleshoot
- Submit your cover letter

This guide will also provide you a checklist so that you can ensure that you have covered all the necessary areas for your cover letter.

The main purposes of a cover letter are to:

- Expand upon the information in your resume and show how your skills coincide with the job description and the needs and values of an organization
- Introduce you to an employer and demonstrate your personality on paper
- Demonstrate your written communication skills and attention to detail
- Provide your contact information and demonstrate your eagerness to speak with the employer in the future
- Do all of the above in a concise and effective manner

Frequently Asked Questions about Cover Letters

Why do I need to write a cover letter?

A good cover letter can be the difference that gets you an interview for an internship or job. Effective writing skills are highly valued and, no matter what your major is, an applicant who can write concisely and powerfully will stand out over other job seekers.

Do I always need a cover letter?

Yes. Even if a job description does not specifically call for a cover letter, you will do yourself a disservice by not submitting a cover letter in addition to your resume or CV.

Can a cover letter be longer than one page?

As a general rule, cover letters should be no longer than one page, even with normal formatting. If you find it absolutely necessary, you may use smaller margins while formatting to fit more content on 1 page. Keep your letter between 300 and 400 words, and remember that typical recruiters review job applications in less than 10 seconds. Make sure your writing captures and sustains their attention.

What if I can't write?

Because of your liberal arts background with Macalester, you have been or will be required to take at least one writing course. Good writing skills, whether they be creatively or academically developed, can be easily translated to creating a good cover letter. If you are someone who does not enjoy writing, don't worry. The following section provides tips to make writing your cover letter as easy as possible.

Starting From Scratch

Please note: The best cover letter you can write will be tailored to the specific position to which you are applying. While parts of your cover letter may be applicable to several different jobs or internships, always make sure that you create a new cover letter for each position.

Organize your thoughts before writing and determine the points on your resume that you wish to highlight. Like an academic paper, a cover letter should be laid out in a clear and logical manner. Each section should have a specific purpose.

Do not expect a perfect draft the first time you write a cover letter. In fact, you should go through multiple drafts while writing to ensure that you eliminate confusing phrases, misspelled words, bad grammar, etc.

Write Your First Draft

1. Write several opening sentences that you think may catch your reader's attention and select your favorite.

2. Identify key words or goals in the job or organization description and cite them in reference to your own skills. For instance, if a job description says, "Looking for a highly motivated, customer-oriented individual to work full-time at our customer service desk," you should choose an example from your own work/education experience that proves you have these skills. Then, turn your experiences into rough sentences.
 - a. *Example:* "During my time as a Program Assistant at the Career Development Center, I completed many independent projects, including writing and editing content for the CDC website, organizing the online job database, and updating the social media accounts for the office. In addition, I managed the front desk, handling questions and phone calls from daily clientele."

3. Think about not only what the job requires, but some transferrable/unique skills that you can bring to the job. Try to answer the question, “How can I help the organization?” Some transferable skills include:
 - a. Leadership qualities
 - b. Ability to multi-task
 - c. Teamwork skills
 - d. Ability to meet deadlines
 - e. Interpersonal skills
 - f. Ability to work independently
 - g. Written communication skills
 - h. Verbal communication skills
 - i. Computer skills
4. *Do not* simply restate your resume. Employers have already read your resume. What can you offer them that is new? What are skills that you have that your resume does not do justice?
5. *Write a “Fast Draft.”* This is just what it sounds like: get a pen and paper or sit down with your laptop and try to write your cover letter as quickly as you can. Aim for less than ten minutes. If you make an error, skip it. Use the rough sentences you wrote in step two and cobble together a few paragraphs. The goal of a “Fast Draft” is not to have a perfect cover letter by any means. It is a way to get all your thoughts down on paper and to feel more comfortable with writing. While you will not want to use this as your final cover letter, parts of it may be worth using and editing to put in your final draft.
6. *EDIT AND PROOFREAD* the content that you have, then view the “Outline” section to see how your letter should come together.

Outline:
The essential parts of a cover letter

1. Heading
2. Introduction
3. Argument
4. Closing

1. Headings

a. Heading for Emailed Cover Letters

Start your email by addressing the email to the contact name listed. If you cannot find the name of the hiring authority, you may address your letter to “hiring professionals” — e.g., “Dear Hiring Professional(s).” If you do not know the gender of the person you are addressing, *do not guess*. You can avoid using Mr. or Ms. by instead using their full name to address them. Use page 10 of this guide for further instructions on how to effectively send your letter.

b. Heading for mailed cover letters

Include your contact information:

- name
- address
- phone number
- email

The date and the organization contact information should directly follow your contact information.

Example for Mailed Cover Letters:

Lester D. Scot
1600 Grand Avenue
St. Paul, MN, 55105
lscot12@macalester.edu
5/21/14

Mr., Ms., or Dr. Employer*[^]
Title of Employer
Organization
Street Address
City, State, Zip

*If you do not know the gender of the person you are addressing, *do not guess*. You can avoid using Mr. or Ms. by instead using their full name to address them.

[^]If you cannot find the name of the hiring authority, you may address your letter to “hiring professionals” — e.g., “Dear Hiring Professionals.”

2. Introduction

You can organize your introduction in many ways. However, critical information to include in every introduction is:

- a. Who you are
- b. Why you are writing
- c. How you learned about the position and why you are interested in it; briefly describe and introduce your key qualifications.
- d. If you have a connection with someone at the organization you are applying to, it may be valuable to mention their name. *Make sure that you get your contact’s permission to use their name in your cover letter.*

The most important part of your introduction will be to highlight how your skills and goals align with those of the organization and what you can add to the position/organization when you are hired.

3. Argument

The argument of your cover letter is your chance to convince your reader why you are a good match for the position and for the organization. Refer to the experiences and skills listed in your resume and expand on them to make a powerful, concise argument. Think from an employer's point of view: You wouldn't want to read a repetitive, long-winded cover letter. Make your points clear and strong.

A good argument will:

- a. Demonstrate that you are a good match for the organization's mission/goals and job requirements.
- b. Convince the reader that the organization will benefit from hiring you.
- c. Maintain a personable tone. Allow some of your personality to show. What makes you unique? How can your letter stand out among dozens of others?
- d. *Not* explain your entire resume. These two documents work hand in hand. The cover letter is merely a guide to highlight certain skills that your resume lists and that the job asks for in its description.
- e. If possible, demonstrate your knowledge of the organization's broader work and goals instead of remaining within the confines of the description of the job you are applying for.

Ineffective Arguments*

A. Do not sound indifferent to the job you are applying for. Even if this is not your dream job, to make a good impression you must sound enthusiastic and well-informed.

"I guess the only reason I am applying for this position is because I studied Journalism, originally an Engineer and am right now studying at a left-leaning institution which studies markets just to criticize them. I don't read much of the magazine that you mentioned in your job requirement article but yes, I do have an analytical mind."

B. Do not list irrelevant information. Are your skills applicable to the job you are applying for?

"My skills consist of being great at multi-tasking, great with computers, bilingual (fluent Spanish), reliable and having very flexible hours. I am 24 years old which is why I think this position is a great fit for me."

C. Make good use of any contacts you may have. Your "friend's grandfather" will not hold a lot of weight. Keep your sentences concise and varied.

"I have always been an avid reader of both fiction and news and had my own blog a couple of years ago. I received some feedback from the grandfather of a friend of mine, and it was very positive. He had been in the publishing for over 30 years and he felt that my writing style was a good blend of contemporary serious issues and sarcasm."

*These arguments were taken from the article "12 Worst Cover Letters We've Ever Received" by Jessica Liebman, Managing Editor of *Business Insider*.

Effective Arguments

- A. "I have strong communication skills and experience working with diverse audiences. As an intern for the Seed Savers Collaborative, I collaborated with international partners to produce outreach materials and make presentations to young farmers on the importance of preserving biodiversity."
- B. "I am interested in this position because it combines my two passions; youth mentorship and legal advocacy. Having experienced the barriers of the immigration system and difficulties of navigating an unfamiliar school, I am dedicated to supporting youth that face institutional and structural obstacles."
- C. "I believe that my research experience, combined with my commitment to and interest in interdisciplinary approaches, makes me an excellent candidate for the position."

4. Closing

A closing should restate your main points and make a request for an interview. Include the best way to reach you in your closing. Ask your readers to contact you and thank them for their time.

Five common errors that may damage your on-paper appearance

1. *Lack of focus in your writing:* As mentioned above, being concise in your cover letter is crucial. You want an employer to know what you're talking about and why. Make sure that all the information you are presenting about yourself is relevant to the job. Avoid excessive wordiness and don't use vague phrases like, "I am looking for a position in a growth-oriented organization that will utilize my many skills." Don't leave an employer wondering what they have just read when they finish your cover letter or if they were the sole recipient of your letter.
2. *Poor sentence structure and/or bad grammar:*
 - Avoid starting every sentence with "I." Mixing up your sentence structure will help keep your reader interested and will show off your writing skills and your personality.
 - Use the active voice and strong action verbs. For example, write "I implemented a program..." instead of "The program was started by..."
 - Double-check your commas, apostrophes, semicolons, colons, etc. Correct punctuation is essential!
3. *Misspelled words or typos:* This may seem very obvious, but make sure that you remember this step. Even if you think of yourself as being a strong writer with good spelling skills, make sure to re-read your cover letter. The tiniest errors can add up to make an unfavorable impression.

4. *Inappropriate style (too casual or too academic)*: Consider the chart on the following page from Katharine Brooks' book *You Majored in What?* for the differences between academic and business writing. Avoid informal language. Do not brag, self-deprecate, complain, or appeal to sympathy:

- “You’d be lucky to have me working for you.”
- “I know this letter is late, but...”
- “Although I don’t have any experience in your field...”
- “I’m only applying because I need a job.”

Academic versus Business Writing

Key Considerations	Academic Writing	Business Writing
Audience	Faculty: well-educated and knowledgeable about subject	General, education varies, sometimes unknown
Subject	Topic appealing to academic world, such as humanities, history, and so on	Topic appropriate to workplace needs, job finding, promotion, informative memos, and so on
Expected length	Usually lengthy; three-plus pages	Minimal; one to two pages
Tone/Style	Academic, formal, learned, focus is on research/theories	Attention getting, professional, businesslike, straightforward
Vocabulary	Academic, formal, technical, specialized	Short words/short sentences. Can be technical or specialized, but must be clear and to the point
Purpose	To inform, advance, and demonstrate knowledge, demonstrate research and writing skills	To inform and inspire the reader to take action, to sell a product or an idea

5. *Not focusing on the needs of your audience:* Remember who you are addressing and why. Try to think from the point of view of an employer who may well have read many cover letters in one day. How can you demonstrate your strengths and your personality on one page?

Things to consider:

1. Learn more about the organization before you apply and write a cover letter. While a job description may catch your eye because it seems to match your skills, it is important to understand the bigger picture that an organization presents. If you sound uninformed or unaware of the broader goals of an organization in your cover letter, you will be less likely to be offered an interview.

2. In writing your cover letter, consider how your own skills may match the goals of the organization and expand on this in the body of your letter.

EX: A job description asks for fluency in a foreign language. How can your education or experiences prove to an employer that you have the required level of fluency?

EX: A job description asks for creativity and strong verbal communication skills. What experiences can you relate that will demonstrate your creativity and communication skills?

3. Additionally, consider who will be reading your cover letter: Human Resources, your potential future supervisor, etc. Based on this information, ask yourself the following questions:

- How do I want to present myself to my potential future employer?
- What level of experience or education do I need for this position?
- How do my skills match up with the job description?

****If you want more information on an organization, look up and read through their website or contact the CDC to see if a career counselor can offer you more information.****

Before you send your cover letter...

1. *Proofread!* As mentioned above, it is critical that you give the best possible impression on paper, and grammar and spelling are a huge part of this. Also proofread for confusing sentences, awkward word choice, or formatting that may have gone astray.

2. *Come visit the CDC!* Review your cover letter with a career counselor and get further advice and suggestions from them. Make an appointment online using MC2 or call or email the CDC at (651) 696-6384 or cdc@macalester.edu. We are happy to help with cover letters and all other aspects of applying for a job.

3. *See the following section* about the proper way to send a cover letter.

Emailing your application to a potential employer

Do I send the cover letter as an attachment or include it in the body of the email?

You can choose either option. Some organizations will request that cover letters are sent as an attachment. Unless directly specified, you can choose either format.

Sending the cover letter in the body of the email:

1. *Start with your greeting.* Forgo including your address and the organization's address at the top of the email.
2. *Write an effective subject line.* This will be the first information the organization sees. Make sure the information included is informative. Examples:
 - "Marketing Specialist-YourFirstNameYourLastName"
 - "YourName-Advocacy Intern"
 - "Application for Education Assistant-YourFirstName_YourLastName"
 - "Job #9876_Analyst_YourName"
 - "Referred by FirstName_LastName"
3. *Make sure to include your contact information after your signature.* Including how to contact you in the body of your email makes it easier for an employer to contact you.
4. *Save your files with informative and relevant file names in either MS Word or as a PDF.*
5. Use PDF to insure that your formatting remains consistent.
6. *Don't forget to attach your files!* Consider sending a test email to yourself before the actual application is sent.
7. *When you send, include yourself in the "Bcc" line.* You'll be able to see a copy of your application email, and keep for your records and follow-up.

Sending your cover letter as an attachment:

1. Make sure to write a brief formal email that introduces application and attached documents.
2. Save your files with informative and relevant file names in either MS Word or as a PDF.

Uploading your application to an organization's website

1. Follow the organization's directions.
2. Use appropriate file types.
3. Save your files with your name, and the type of document, e.g. "FirstName-LastName-CoverLetter-Org" or "FirstName-LastName-Resume-Organization".

Cover Letter Checklist	Yes	No	Comments
Is the cover letter single spaced?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there a space between each paragraph?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are there three spaces between a closing and the writer's name?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there a space between the heading (contact info) and the greeting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are all the paragraphs left aligned? OR Are the first lines of each paragraph indented?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are standard 1-inch margins used?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the letter centered in the middle of the page (space at top and bottom of page is equal)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If being electronically submitted, is the subject line of the email simple and professional?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If being electronically submitted, is the letter the correct document type? (PDF or MS Word?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the file name formatted correctly as "Your name-cover letter-organization name?"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there a greeting and closing in the email?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has a test version of the email been sent to the writer to ensure that attachments work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has research been performed on the company being applied to?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you identified key words in the job description?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the contact information of both the writer and the recipient included at the top of the page?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are the included experiences of the writer concise? Relevant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Does each paragraph have a specific focus?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the writer's personality come across?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are strong action verbs used?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the tone of the letter appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have the skills of the writer been effectively communicated and do they align with the job description?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there a closing? Is it appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has the letter been proofread? Has it been proofread multiple times? If not, go back and proofread again!	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Additional Comments:

Sources:

<http://wp.stolaf.edu/pipercenter/cover-letters/>

https://apps.carleton.edu/career/students/application/cover_letters/

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/549/01/>

<http://ucs.yalecollege.yale.edu/content/cover-letters>

Brooks, Katharine. *You Majored in What?: Mapping Your Path from Chaos to Career*. New York, NY: Viking, 2009. Print.

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/the-8-cover-letters-you-need-to-read-now>

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/15/jobs/15career.html?_r=0

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/jobapplications/ss/how-to-send-an-attachment.htm>

<http://www.businessinsider.com/worst-cover-letters-2011-10?op=1>

Ms. Laurie Wilson
Director of Human Resources
Joslyn Art Museum
1324 Mississippi Way
Stuart, IN 93712

June 16, 2014
1600 Grand Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
scotty@macalester.edu

Dear Ms. Wilson,

This letter of application is in regard to the Open Field Coordinator position with the Education and Community Programs Department. Kenneth Ghidorzi suggested that I apply to this position. This position is especially exciting for me as I am a Minneapolis native and recent graduate from Macalester College with a Bachelor's degree in Studio Art. I have enjoyed the resources of the Joslyn Art Museum throughout my life. I also have the direct skills and experience to contribute to community arts education.

My research experience in Indonesia as Manford Foundation Fellow and Vietnam through the Institute for Global Citizenship and International Training developed my skills in coordinating complex travel details, disseminating information through social media channels and organizing discussions among public audiences and artists. In Sumatra, Indonesia I traveled around the island living with and interviewing female artists. By building these relationships, I was able to coordinate a discussion/workshop among fellow students and Balinese artists at a local gallery. This research, and subsequent distribution of my materials, expanded my written and verbal skills.

As a Literacy Ambassador at Howard Kennedy Elementary in St. Paul, MN I worked with academically at-risk students to increase literacy and implement classroom programs that engaged students in art activities. This position helped increase my awareness for the need of art education for young people. I gained skills coordinating these education-based projects independently, as well as increasing my verbal communication in clearly and concisely translating the details of the projects to both teachers and students.

In addition, my commitment to improving my own community through the education initiatives was also important in my role as Campaign Coordinator for the Outdoors Association. In this position, I traveled to college campuses throughout the Midwest, recruiting volunteers, training existing members of campaign committees, and fundraising for current campaigns. By organizing travel itineraries and workshops, I developed an attention to detail and an ability to engage a diverse group of people.

The unique combination of work and volunteer experience, academic research and education, and the communication skills I possess, will allow me to make a meaningful contribution to Joslyn Art Museum. Therefore, I am eager to meet with you and discuss how my qualifications and experience can contribute to the Open Field program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mac A. Lester

Mr. Clark Cub
Hiring Manager
The Chicago Cubs
1060 W Addison Street
Chicago, IL 60613
(773) 404-2827

Dear Mr. Cub,

I spent a significant part of my childhood in the bleachers at Cubs games, snacking on popcorn and cheering on the team with my grandfather. It's that passion that has shaped my career—from helping to establish the sports marketing major at my university to leading a college baseball team to an undefeated season as assistant coach—and what led me to apply for the Marketing Coordinator position with the Chicago Cubs.

My dedication to the world of sports is clearly exemplified by my successful campaign to create a sports marketing major at my university. To make this possible, I not only had to do extensive research on sports marketing and the expectations for the field, but also collaborated with a wide range of people during this time. This experience proved my persistence, entrepreneurial spirit and my ability to connect on a personal level with a wide range of people, from college students to sports professionals. Additionally, this task gave me invaluable knowledge about the ins and outs of sports marketing, and I put this knowledge to the test during my time as a Marketing and Sales Intern with the Minnesota Twins. The combination of my innate leadership and creativity with my education led to a 10 percent increase in sales in select retail stalls at Target Field.

My depth of knowledge in this field is rivaled only by my passion for it. Baseball has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember, and through it I have learned many skills that have proved useful in my professional life as well. Teamwork, enthusiasm, and hard work were what brought the team I helped coach to a perfect season, and those core components of baseball are my values for a successful career as well. And my education has made me that much more of a triple threat; in addition to my Sports Marketing major, my concentrations in Business and Organizational Development have more than prepared me to take the field as Marketing Coordinator.

Much of my education, experience, and indeed my life has revolved around baseball. I'd like to think that my passion for my career as a sports marketer was sparked long ago at Wrigley Field, and therefore I am eager to speak with you and see if I can't make my career come full circle. I can be best reached at (651) 555-0014 or scotty@macalester.edu. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future. Thank your for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mac Lester

Sent via email

Subject line: M. Lester Application---Loft Marketing & Communications Internship

Dear Jamie Byrd,

I write regarding my interest in the Marketing & Communications internship position for the spring months. While my experience in nonprofit literacy and learning centers has mainly been as a direct service provider, my interest in such organizations has grown to include marketing and communications concerns. I believe the responsibilities you've outlined in the description will both refine and expand upon skills which are necessary aspects of every nonprofit: managing social media, planning events, and evaluating and maintaining communications data. I'm confident that through practice, such tasks will transform my perception of a nonprofit. In return, I know my dedication to the literary arts and my experience with other nonprofit literacy and learning centers will be of great value to your organization.

My qualifications for this position begin with my passion for the literary arts and providing educational opportunities for them. As a writer myself, I believe literature and writing play exceptional roles for communities. This past summer, I interned for the Minnesota Literacy Council as a team member of the Full Circle Publishing Project and put this belief into practice. With the goal of publishing culturally-relevant children's literature, I assisted in the project's initiation, developing a systematic process in order to effectively collaborate with third parties. Tasks included managing their Facebook page, updating their blog, and communicating by formal letter. I also did extensive research on culturally-relevant children's literature, writing a white paper on how to weave such a goal into the pragmatic terrain of nonprofits. Currently, as a writing tutor at Macalester College, I am working with other seniors to develop our communications with students. We are creating informative videos for our website, re-envisioning how appointments are carried through, and tinkering with evaluation sheets and appointment reminder cards.

I wish to deepen my perception of how nonprofits can build and sustain customer sectors. While I aspire to one day be a published poet, this aspiration is laced with a curiosity of how our society receives and responds to the arts. I believe the Marketing & communications internship at the Loft will deepen my understanding of the community-minded outreach required to promote the arts in our society, ultimately informing the desire I have to be an artist.

My passion for creative writing, my work and volunteer experience with nonprofit literacy and learning centers, and my interest in the marketing of such centers will allow me to make a meaningful contribution to the Loft Literacy Center as a Marketing & Communications intern. I would very much like to interview with your organization for this position at your convenience, and am best reached by email at scotty@macalester.edu. As is appropriate, I worked with Jennifer Krentz, your Adult Education Specialist, on the Full Circle Project, connected with Luke Mu at a Macalester event, and have been recommended by Meggie Ferris, a family member of Nick Hadley, to apply for an internship with your organization. Please find my resume and a writing sample attached. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mac A. Lester

Ms. Rebecca Wright
270 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017
J.P. Morgan

Dear Ms. Banks:

I am currently studying Economics and Applied Mathematics at Macalester College. I am interested in pursuing a Summer Investment Banking Analyst internship at J.P. Morgan. I have spoken with Macalester alumnus Wei Nguyen and several high school alumni including Sam Yao, an Executive Director at the Investment Banking Division, and Danielle Cordova, an Associate covering global government clients. I was deeply impressed by J.P. Morgan's great reputation, extraordinary culture and global capacity. I am especially interested in the Food & Beverage team and the M&A team.

For the past summer, I interned with Black River Asset Management, where I performed financial analysis on an M&A deal, and created financial models for a portfolio company. In addition, I also gained knowledge in commodities, agriculture, animal protein, and the food supply chain by analyzing projects in various sectors including pork, poultry, juice and fish farming. I wish to get exposure to more industries and to contribute my analytical skills at your firm.

In addition to my internships, I gained entrepreneurial experience through helping a partner establish a summer school featuring professors from Yale, Harvard, Columbia, and Princeton in Shanghai. I helped secure ¥400,000 of the total ¥1.7 million initial funding.

A copy of my resume is enclosed for your reference. I would welcome an opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you and learn more about your firm at your earliest convenience. I can be reached at (651) 555-0015 and scotty@macalester.edu. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mac A. Lester

Sent via email

Subject line: Mac Lester-Environmental Agency field associate application

Dear Mr. Jimenez,

I was pleased to discover the field associate position listed on your website recently. As a former resident of the Santa Barbara area with a deep concern for the environment, I am particularly impressed with the work your agency has done to save state forests and strengthen the Clean Water Act. I would like to be part of the team that assists you in your efforts, and I believe I have the fund-raising and advocacy skills you are seeking.

I worked in sales throughout my college years while pursuing a challenging and time-intensive major (music), but I always found time to demonstrate my concern for the environment. I received an A in the two-semester environmental science class I took in college and volunteered for numerous environmental projects, doing everything from highway cleanup to canvassing and fundraising to protesting at the state capital when it appeared that much-needed environmental legislation might not pass.

I suspect you do not often receive applications from music majors, but it is my music background that actually honed many of the skills I would use at Environmental Agency. I developed my strong analytical skills through music theory classes, my dogged determination through endless practice and rehearsing, and my communication skills through performances and presentations.

As requested, I have attached a copy of my resume. I will be in the Santa Barbara area the week of September 7–14 and would like to arrange a meeting if that would be convenient for you. I will contact your agency within the next week to confirm that you received this e-mail. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mac Lester
1600 Grand Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
scotty@macalester.edu
Cell: (651) 555-0015

Resume attached as a PDF document

Sent via email

Subject line: Development Assistant, The Children's Room

Dear Hiring Manager,

I was excited to discover The Children's Room opening for a Development Assistant through Nancy Simpson-Baker's post to the Young Nonprofit Professionals Network mailing list. As an aspiring nonprofit professional with a passion for encouraging well-being in children, I am eager to contribute my enthusiasm and skills to the Development team and assist with the diverse tasks required to maintain a healthy and effective nonprofit like The Children's Room.

Over the past two years, I have become adept at communication with diverse stakeholders, from library administrators to parents and tutors. As a community programming coordinator for the Saint Paul Public Library in Minnesota, I developed and executed a volunteer communication plan that included intervention tracking, special training events, and regular phone check-ins and e-mails that led to an increase in system-wide program satisfaction. After working with co-coordinators, staff liaisons, and community groups on a number of projects, I have found that I thrive in collaborative work environments with ample opportunities to communicate with the public at large. I particularly enjoy encouraging others to become "champions" of the cause to which they are volunteering their time and monetary resources. The folks who support The Children's Room each day may need encouragement and guidance of their own, and I aspire to provide those opportunities in my work with the development team.

In addition to my background in communications and coordination, I also have a strong eye for quantitative data and its relationship to social service outcomes. I worked closely with the Volunteer Coordinator at the Saint Paul Public Library to track volunteer contributions through a Filemaker Pro database, which I subsequently utilized to draft and present reports for the library director, grant-writers, and collaborating organizations in the community. I believe this skill-set will map onto development work nicely. I also look forward to learning all of the relevant software techniques and best practices to fundraising and donor relations.

The Children's Room provides an invaluable service to grieving youth, and I aspire to help support your programming with compassion, good-natured encouragement, and a strong work ethic. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to speak with me further. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warm Regards,

Mac A. Lester

Notes:

Next Steps:

<p>Highlighted CDC Services Career Counseling Appointments for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarify strengths & interests• Discuss potential career plans• Review resume• Plan job search strategies• Interview prep <p>Networking & Personal Branding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tools to Access Mac Alumni• Social Media Inventory• LinkedIn Profile Review	<p>Complimentary CDC Guides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resume & C.V. Guide• Job Search Skills• Informational Interviewing• Developing a Professional Online Presence <p>All guides are available for download on the CDC Web site.</p>
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Need help? Questions?

- Scheduled 30- or 60-min. appointments
- Drop-in Appts: M-F: 2-4pm
- Appointments in person, phone & Skype.

Connect with CDC

