



Cover Letter Planning Guide

What is a Cover Letter?

An effective cover letter inspires an employer to read your resume. The cover letter demonstrates familiarity with the organization and emphasizes how your experience meets the needs of the organization. Communication skills, attention to detail, enthusiasm, and style are all demonstrated through a well-written letter. A cover letter should not re-state the information on your resume, but should rather show relationships between your skills and the position for which you are applying.

Where Do I Begin?

To start your cover letter, begin by thinking about the following: What unique skills do you have that match the position requirements? Why should they interview/hire you? Why do you want to work for that particular employer? How can the employer benefit from your education, experience, etc.?

Does HSC SON Offer Cover Letter Assistance?

Yes! The Career Services Center provides you with Optimal Resume which contains a Resume and Cover Letter Builder and can be accessed at <https://ttu.optimalresume.com/>. After you have used the Optimal Resume site, email your cover letter for review to one of the Career Services Center staff. We will send you feedback in a timely manner. For additional information, visit our website: www.ttuhsoc.edu/son/career

Cover Letter Tips

Follow these easy tips to improve the quality of your cover letter

- Limit your cover letter to 3-4 brief paragraphs; aim for a total length of one-half to three-quarters of a page.
- Be specific when describing abilities, skills, honors, activities and experience; provide examples.
- Fill in the blanks your resume leaves out; your cover letter provides the employer with additional information about who you are and what you have done.
- Avoid using slang terms, jargon, or exaggerating when writing your cover letter.
- A cover letter should indicate that you have a clear understanding of your career goals and job objectives.
- Either use the same heading as your resume with your contact information, or include it at the top of the letter.
- Margin your cover letter to the left with no indentations. Single space your paragraphs and leave three or four blank spaces in which to sign your name.
- Tailor a new cover letter for each employer and revise paragraphs for every letter.
- Make sure your envelope matches the same professional look of your cover letter and resume.
- Avoid hand writing your envelope.

Cover Letter Strategies

Addressing Your Cover Letter

What if there is no contact name in the job advertisement? Who do you send your cover letter to? Find one! This will take some research, either via telephone or the Internet. You may want to call the target employer and get an actual name of a recipient for your cover letter. Make sure you get the correct spelling of the name and the appropriate job title. This will set you apart from most applicants. If you are unable to address your letter to a specific individual with his or her correct title, you may want to write "Employer" or "Human Resources."

Begin with a Strong "Hook"

Catch an employer's attention immediately by advertising your strengths and unique skills. Provide the reader with evidence as to why you are the best candidate for the position.

Emphasize How "You" Will Contribute to the Organization/Employer

Your letter should be employer centered, not self-centered. Ask yourself "How can I be of service to this employer?"

Cover Letter Essentials

Follow these easy guidelines to improve the quality of your cover letter:

- Use the same font and paper as your resume
- Typed and laser printed
- Original (avoid mailing the same exact letter to multiple employers)
- Positive, professional, confident and enthusiastic sounding
- Error free (have someone proofread it)
- Brief and to the point (one page)
- Use an outline system to organize your thoughts before writing
- Include the reference job code if mentioned in the ad
- Provide additional information and details which are not on your resume or expand on your main selling points
- Send to the SON Career Services Center staff for review/critique

Cover Letter Format

Contact Information

Your Street Address

City, State Zip Code

Telephone Number

Today's Date

NOTE: If you use a formal heading with your contact information, do not list it again. (See page 4)

Name of Contact

Title Company/Organization

Street Address City, State Zip Code

Dear Ms. /Mr.:

First Paragraph–Introduction

State the reason for writing this cover letter. Name the specific job title or type of work for which you are applying. Indicate where you learned of the opening (newspaper, Job Connection/Internet, SON Career Services Center, Career Fair, friend, etc.). State that you believe you possess/have a background that deserves consideration for the position.

Second Paragraph–Body

Explain why you are interested in the position and field of work or why you are interested in working for that employer. Explain your qualifications and achievements (this may include your academic background, work experience and or skills). Try not to repeat exact information found in your resume; however make reference to the enclosed resume. State how you could be successful in this position, why you are qualified and how you match the requirements of the job description. Mention specific accomplishments that directly relate to the field of work for which you are applying and why you enjoy that work (you may want to cite a specific experience on the job, project, committee, or task that you worked on).

Third Paragraph–Closing

Indicate that you are interested in meeting with the employer to further discuss the position and that you welcome an interview. Refer to your address and telephone number above should they require any additional information or should they request an interview of you. Indicate times/dates that you will be available, if necessary. Thank the reader/employer for reading your resume and cover letter and their thoughtful consideration of you for the position.

Sincerely,

[Your Signature]

Your Name Typed

Enclosure(s)

Sample Cover Letter

ANGELA APPLICANT

3601 4th • Lubbock, TX 79430 • 502-555-5555 • aapplicant@gmail.com

May 5, 2011

Ms. Rita Recruiter
Recruiting Specialist
Healthcare Hospital
1234 Helpful Lane
Lubbock, TX 79000

Dear Ms. Recruiter:

I am writing to express my interest in the Senior Interior Design position at Paychex, which is posted on your website. My professional experience and my interest in corporate facilities design are an excellent fit for this position, and I am enthusiastic about joining the professional staff at Paychex. My resume is enclosed for your consideration.

Through my education at Texas Tech University and my co-op experience at ABC Employer, I have enjoyed designing and planning attractive and useful interiors for local businesses. This includes 4+ years of experience in retail and office furnishing sales. In addition, my experiences and expertise in interior design include the following:

- Experience in coordinating and implementing all aspects of project design, space planning, fabric selection, drawings, furniture specification, accessories, and design presentation.
- Specific attention to detail and set up of jobs within allotted time and budget constraints.
- Excellent interpersonal and team building skills with direct experience of being a liaison between departments.
- General knowledge of AutoCAD and Haworth Furniture systems.

I am especially interested in this position because I have a direct interest in managing and designing cost-effective commercial offices. As a result, I am confident that I would enhance the function and quality of interior space at Paychex. I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you in person to discuss my qualifications further. Please contact me at 502-555-5555 to schedule an interview or if you are in need of additional information. Thank you for your consideration.

I appreciate your assistance and look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

[Your Signature]

Angela Applicant

Enclosure(1)

Sample Cover Letter

Angela Applicant
3601 4th
Lubbock, TX 79430
aapplicant@gmail.com
May 5, 2014

Ms. Rita Recruiter
Recruiting Specialist
Healthcare Hospital
1234 Helpful Lane
Lubbock, TX 79000

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