



COVER LETTER RESOURCE GUIDE

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THE ART OF WRITING POWERFUL COVER LETTERS

Any letter in your campaign has the opportunity to create a favorable impression or contact for you. Whether it be a networking contact, a potential employer, a recruiter, agency or thank you note, if it is well written, your letter will lead the reader to think more of you and have fewer reasons to deselect you in your job search effort. If your letter is poorly written, the contact, employer, or recruiter, may not even take the time to review your request, your resume, or your application. Not only will your application end up in the trash, but there is a good chance that part of your reputation will end up there too.

To help you construct, personalize, and avoid the common mistakes that plague letter writing in job search campaigns, we provide an array of types of letters you may use, tips and construction of each type, examples of letters, and templates to use to help you see the main points as you construct and personalize your letters in your style.

Cover letters serve as a way for you to connect to the reader for a variety of purposes. You want a recruiter to know very succinctly why they should be marketing you for their listings. And you want an employer to see that you are ambitious and anxious to contribute your energy and skills to the success of their company.

We provide helpful and easy to use resources for your letter writing. You can construct a well written cover letter that demonstrates interest in, and knowledge about, an industry and a specific organization. Very quickly, you can create a proper networking letter that clearly states your background and why you may be of use to the recipient. In short, you see letter writing from the recipient's point of view. If you were doing the hiring, recruiting or screening, what compelling points can help portray you as an energetic and focused professional, worthy of their time and consideration?

WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT, YOU ARE SELLING!

Your campaign letters are advertisements about yourself. They show the quality of you as a person. Are you the same as everyone else, or can the recipient see some reason they should talk with you, see you or consider you as a potential employee?

Think about your letters from a marketing standpoint. Effective television commercials catch your attention by highlighting only the most attractive features of a product. Your cover letter should be your commercial, in which you highlight your most attractive features as a worthy networking contact, a potential person for a recruiter to represent,

or a prospective employee that shows the appropriate interest, knowledge and fit within an organization. Remember, people receive hundreds of pieces of correspondence on a daily basis. No one is going to waste time reading through a long letter that is slow to develop its purpose, is not properly targeted, and is crammed with text inappropriate to the reader. Be brief, understand your reader, and grab their interest. Help them see why you are writing, what you want them to know about you, and why talking with you makes sense.

NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK!

For networking letters, quickly reveal who referred you to them and what you want them to do. For letters to recruiters, reveal what you want in a position and distinguish yourself with one or two of your accomplishments or abilities that show you are an above-average candidate for the position. For a targeting direct letter, state what you saw or read that links you to this person. Reflect your experience and qualifications, and how they may be of interest to the reader. Stressing only one or two unique attributes increases your chances of being remembered and getting to the next step of your campaign.

If you create interest, you get a chance to tell more of your story. Use the letter properly. It should be designed to get you to the next phase of your campaign, nothing else. Compartmentalize it just like any other part of your campaign. Use the letter to move you to the next step, whatever that is for you.

PERSONALIZE EACH LETTER

The success of your job-hunting campaign relies on the quality of your contacts, how well you introduce yourself, how you show enthusiasm and make a good match with them, not on the quantity of letters, resume and applications you send out. Taking time to research your contacts, the recruiters and agencies you use, and the prospective employers, promises to be much more effective than sending out hundreds of form letters. The examples provided are not intended to be copied and mass distributed. We want to make it easy, but we don't want you to disservice yourself by merely copying without personalization.

For example, in a cover letter for an employer, what you want to convey is, this is where I want to work, I have done my research, and I am confident of my decision. Also, the employer will view your interest as an indication that you are likely to stay with the company for a substantial period of time if hired.

As best you can, determine the appropriate person to whom you should address your cover letter. In general, the more influential your contact is, the better. We will cover this more in the tips section and in the examples and templates, but you can see the intent. Try to contact the head of the department in which you are interested. This will be easiest in small and mid-size companies where the head of the department is likely to have an active role in initial screening.

If you are applying to a larger corporation, it is likely that a human resources or personnel department will screen your application. If you are instructed to direct your inquiry to this division, attempt to find out the name of the senior human resources manager. This way, you may be able to cut down on the amount of hands your resume passes through on its way to the final decision-maker.

At any rate, be sure to include your contact's name and title on both your letter and the envelope. This will ensure that your letter will get through to the proper person. In general, a resume does not have to accompany every cover letter you send, but a cover letter should be enclosed every time you send a resume. Even if you are following up on an advertisement that reads simply "send resume", be sure to include a cover letter. It is not professional to send out a resume without one.

Below are basic tips for letters and specific bullet points to guide you in the creation of customized and personalized high impact campaign correspondence.

COVER LETTER WRITING 101

I: **Basic Tips for Cover Letters:**

- Make sure they are addressed to the right person
- Know that person's needs and speak to those needs
- Know your skills and strengths
- Use networking or contact name where applicable
- Keep letters and paragraphs short
- Leave out personal information (age, marital status, etc.)

II: **Typical Cover Letters:**

- Basic
- Networking
- Search Agencies
- Advertised Positions
- Broad-Based Marketing
- Targeted
- Interview Follow-up
- Acceptance of Employment
- Thank You

III: **Specific Letter Guidelines:**

Networking (pre-phone call) Letter:

- If you know the person, make it personal - if you don't know the person, give the name of contact
- Introduce yourself briefly, including your relationship to contact, and give some professional background
- State your desire for an informational interview - state needs specifically and say when you will call to schedule a follow-up
- Express appreciation in advance for time and expertise

Networking Follow-Up:

- Express appreciation for meeting
- Communicate how the contact was beneficial to you
- Reveal any action that occurred that may be of interest to your contact

Letter in Response to Advertised Position:

- Express interest in specific opening, specific company, state, and why
- Briefly describe applicable professional background
- Break down needs of company per description and show why you are a fit (bullet), be specific as to match in skills, strengths, and experience
- Provide salary range, if required
- State availability and desire for interview
- Attach resume

Retained Search Firms:

- State why you are in the market for a new opportunity and why you are writing
- Name your last position and the company and briefly describe - state the position you are currently looking for, and type of company
- Bullet professional strengths
- Give salary, geographical requirements, and availability
- Say when you will follow-up by phone

Contingency Employment Agency:

- Focus on who you are, the type of position you are looking for, and in what industry
- Specifically list your abilities, skill set, and previous title
- Give overview of your availability, salary requirements, and geographic restraints
- State how you can be reached, or when you will follow-up

Interview Follow Up:

- Express thanks to the employer for his/her time
- Emphasis your continued interest in the available position
- Reiterate your unique qualifications for the position
- Show thoughtfulness and attention to detail

Broad-Based Marketing:

- You are advertising your availability to top professionals in your field
- Use an attention-grabbing opening statement
- Reflect your experience, knowledge, and confidence in your capabilities
- Discuss your background in detail
- You are selling your executive abilities

Targeted Direct:

- Open with what you saw/read that links you to this person or organization
- Show how your qualifications are of interest to them
- Highlight specific background skills that are profitable for them to consider
- State availability and volunteer to contact within a certain time frame

Acceptance of Employment:

- Be brief and gracious
- Express thanks and enthusiasm
- Confirm the terms of the agreement, including start date, salary, and benefits

Thank You:

- Be positive about how you were assisted
- Take the opportunity to clarify points, exactly how you benefited
- Express appreciation

TEMPLATE #1: BASIC

April 23, 2020

Salutation Contact Full Name

Title

Company

Mailing Address

City, State Zip

Dear Salutation Contact Last Name (or Hiring Manager if no name is provided):

Immediately explain why your background makes you the best candidate for the position for which you are applying. Keep the first paragraph short and hard-hitting.

Detail what you could contribute to this company. Show how your qualifications will benefit this firm. Remember to keep this letter short; few employers will read a cover letter over one page.

Describe your interest in the corporation. Subtly emphasize your knowledge about this firm (the result of your research effort) and your familiarity with the industry. You should present yourself as eager to work for any company with which you interview.

In the closing paragraph, you should specifically request an interview. Include your phone number and the hours when you can be reached. Alternatively, you might prefer to mention that you will follow-up with a phone call to arrange an interview at a mutually convenient time within several days.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Enclosure

TEMPLATE #2: NETWORKING

April 23, 2020

Salutation Contact Full Name

Title

Company

Mailing Address

City, State Zip

Dear Salutation Contact Last Name (or Hiring Manager if no name is provided):

State how you know this person or who told you about them and how there is a connection between you, the person who referred you and the recipient of the letter.

State the specific reason you are writing, the events that have led to the letter or call and how you want them to help you.

Send them any information that will help them help you. It may be a resume. Ask if you can call them and if the timetable for your call is convenient.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Enclosure

TEMPLATE #3: SEARCH FIRMS/AGENCIES

April 23, 2020

Salutation Contact Full Name

Title

Company

Mailing Address

City, State Zip

Dear Salutation Contact Last Name (or Hiring Manager if no name is provided):

Give a brief one-sentence description of yourself and what type of position for which you are searching. State that you have enclosed your resume.

Provide some narrative about 2-3 recent accomplishments that will be helpful to the recruiter to market you to any client that they may have.

- Relevant background and experience or accomplishment.
- Relevant background and experience or accomplishment.
- Relevant background and experience or accomplishment.

Provide some information about your salary range and geographic preferences in a broad-brush style.

State that you will call to answer any questions and to gain their insights into your marketability.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Enclosure

TEMPLATE #4: AD RESPONSE

April 23, 2020

Salutation Contact Full Name

Title

Company

Mailing Address

City, State Zip

Dear Salutation Contact Last Name (or Hiring Manager if no name is provided):

State what position you are applying for, where you saw the ad, the date, and that you are an ideal or good match for this position.

Give a brief description of your applicable professional background.

List the requirements they state in their ad and your matching qualifications in a bullet fashion with their requirements on one side and your qualifications on the other.

YOUR REQUIREMENTS:

List the requirements stated in the ad
Example: Background in services-oriented environment such as consulting and/or facilities management

MY QUALIFICATIONS:

List key qualifications that match the requirements
Example: 18-year career in service industries. Experience as internal consultant and consulting manager.

List any other pertinent information that is relevant. Assess any requirement they have as to salary.

State again your interest, state enclosure of your resume and list contact information.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Enclosure

TEMPLATE #5: BROAD BASED MARKETING

April 23, 2020

Salutation Contact Full Name

Title

Company

Mailing Address

City, State Zip

Dear Salutation Contact Last Name (or Hiring Manager if no name is provided):

State a high impact industry specific comment that is insightful, which advertises your ability and knowledge to a key executive.

Reflect on your specific skills, knowledge, and abilities that make you valuable to this person and their industry. Discuss your background in detail and the significant accomplishments that highlight your value.

- Relevant background and experience or accomplishment.
- Relevant background and experience or accomplishment.
- Relevant background and experience or accomplishment.

Briefly state your availability and why you are interested in this field.

Acknowledge that there may not be any immediate openings but you want to demonstrate how you can contribute and volunteer to contact them to set up a conversation or meeting.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Enclosure

TEMPLATE #6: TARGETED

April 23, 2020

Salutation Contact Full Name

Title

Company

Mailing Address

City, State Zip

Dear Salutation Contact Last Name (or Hiring Manager if no name is provided):

Open with a high impact statement that relates something you read or saw that links you to this person or organization.

Provide a brief narrative about how your experience and qualification are of interest to them. Highlight specifics that will be of interest to them.

- Relevant background and experience or accomplishment.
- Relevant background and experience or accomplishment.
- Relevant background and experience or accomplishment.

State your availability and offer to contact them within a certain time frame and provide contact information for them.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Enclosure

TEMPLATE #7: FOLLOW UP TO NETWORK MEETING

April 23, 2020

Salutation Contact Full Name

Title

Company

Mailing Address

City, State Zip

Dear Contact First Name:

Express appreciation for the meeting or conversation. Relay how they helped you, how what they provided was beneficial. Convey any action you are taking that is related to them.

Thank them again for their help and support.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

TEMPLATE #8: FOLLOW UP TO INTERVIEW

April 23, 2020

Salutation Contact Full Name

Title

Company

Mailing Address

City, State Zip

Dear Salutation Contact Last Name:

Remind the interviewer of the position for which you were interviewed, as well as the date. Thank him or her for the interview. State your appreciation for their time and for any explanations they might have given you relating to the job responsibilities.

Mention your continued interest in this position and how it is a good fit for you.

Emphasize any points that were brought up in the interview that were particularly important to them that you are uniquely qualified to provide and reiterate your qualifications for this position.

If there were any concerns revealed that you were questioned with, you may want to acknowledge, redirect and show skills that minimize a concern. Be careful not to bring up a concern in your mind that may not be a concern of theirs.

Repeat your enthusiasm and interest and close with any acknowledgement of communication agreements.

If appropriate, close with a suggestion for further action, such as a desire to have additional interviews. Mention your phone number and the hours you can be reached. Alternatively, you may prefer to mention that you will follow up with a phone call in several days.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Enclosure

TEMPLATE #9: ACCEPTANCE OF OFFER

April 23, 2020

Salutation Contact Full Name

Title

Company

Mailing Address

City, State Zip

Dear Salutation Contact Last Name:

Be brief and gracious in your acceptance of their offer. Express thanks and enthusiasm.

Confirm any terms that are appropriate such as start date, salary, and benefits.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

TEMPLATE #10: NETWORKING ASSISTANCE THANK YOU

April 23, 2020

Salutation Contact Full Name

Title

Company

Mailing Address

City, State Zip

Dear Salutation Contact Last Name:

Be positive about the way you were assisted.

Clarify how you were assisted...exactly how you benefited.

State your willingness to help them if you can and be appreciative of their time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

TEMPLATE #11: JOB SEARCH COMPLETION UPDATE AND THANK YOU

April 23, 2020

Salutation Contact Full Name
Title
Company
Mailing Address
City, State Zip

Dear Contact First Name:

Inform the recipient that you have accepted a new position. Tell them a little about the new opportunity in general terms.

Provide a little more detail about the job and how it fits your interests and experience.

Thank them for their time during the course of your search. Cite any specific things they did to help you during your search and how they impacted the success of your overall experience.

Beginning May 18th, I can be reached at:

Company Name:
Mailing Address:
City, State Zip:
Telephone:

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

SAMPLE #1: NETWORKING

April 23, 2020

Mr. James Meridian
Executive Vice President
ABC Company
123 Any Street
City, State 00000

Dear Mr. Meridian:

In recent discussions with John Smith and Al Cooper, they suggested that you might be able to provide me with some information and counsel regarding career options within our industry.

I was recently involved in a consolidation and staff reduction at XYZ Company. After carefully analyzing my capabilities and experience, I believe that my greatest strengths are initiating and building competitively advantaged businesses by creating differentiated products, services, and marketing designed to improve the bottom line. The enclosed resume will give you a more complete understanding of my background and objectives.

I am not writing to ask for a position or expecting you to know of one. Rather, I would appreciate meeting with you to discuss relevancy of my experience in other commercial markets. Because you have broad experience in our industry, you may be able to suggest approaches and contacts.

You can be sure I would be appreciative of your time. I will call next week to arrange a brief meeting or a time when we may talk by phone. In the meantime, you may reach me at (000) 000-0000.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE #2: SEARCH FIRMS/AGENCIES

April 23, 2020

Mr. James Meridian
Executive Vice President
ABC Company
123 Any Street
City, State 00000

Dear Mr. Meridian:

If you should receive an assignment for a seasoned executive with strong analytical and marketing skills, I would welcome your client's consideration. I would be interested in and qualified for the following types of situations and needs:

- Improving business operating performance through focus and team development.
- Opening new markets through effective product design and marketing approaches.
- Building a customer-driven marketing organization.
- Developing alternative distribution channels into existing markets.

The enclosed resume outlines my professional history with several leading companies in the financial and information services industry. Significant contributions in senior line and staff positions include marketing and product development for both consumers and small businesses; then turn-around and profitable growth of nationally ranked credit card programs; company and portfolio acquisitions; and leading strategic and operational planning for divisions of large corporations.

My objective is a senior marketing or general management position. My salary requirements are in the low six figures and, while I would prefer to remain in the Northeast region, relocation for the right opportunity is not an obstacle. If my qualifications match your current search needs, please contact me at (000) 000-0000.

If I can be a source for any other search that you are conducting, please feel free to call.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE #3: AD RESPONSE

April 23, 2020

Mr. James Meridian
Executive Vice President
ABC Company
123 Any Street
City, State 00000

RE: Human Resources Opportunities

Dear Mr. Meridian:

In response to your advertisement in the June 20th, National Ad Search publication, I have listed some of my qualifications to parallel your stated requirements.

Your Requirements:

- Experience in recruitment and staffing.
- Experience in the areas of EEO, Affirmative Action, employee relations.
- Benefits experience.
- Experience with Microsoft Office Suite.

My Qualifications:

- Direct recruitment experience with outside agencies and Corporate HR department.
- Managed recruitment function for \$50 million sales organization.
- Experience with writing Affirmative Action Plans, coaching managers, conducting employee interviews and answering compliance inquiries.
- Established the contracts, plans documents, and SPD's for Unique Software, Inc.
- Worked with Microsoft Office at Unique Software, Inc.

I have also attached a copy of my resume to further highlight my accomplishments.

My salary at Unique Software, Inc. was in the \$50k+ range per year with bonus potential, however, in regard to compensation, I am open to negotiation.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE #4: BROAD BASED MARKETING

April 23, 2020

Mr. James Meridian
Executive Vice President
ABC Company
123 Any Street
City, State 00000

Dear Mr. Meridian:

Organizations that successfully differentiate themselves from competition will grow their share in today's markets. Marketing and sales play an important role in differentiation.

My skills are initiating and building a competitively advantaged business by providing distinctive products, services, marketing and sales strategies that are responsive to customer needs. I have held progressively responsible positions in disposables' sales, marketing and business management, the last nine with XYZ Paper Company. As Director of Marketing and Business Unit Leader for the Foodservice Division, I led my \$125 million plus business in a 17% increase in profits in 2009.

Consolidation and restructuring of our foodservice business cause me to explore new challenges in our industry. I am interested in applying my sales, marketing, and business development skills with a firm like ABC Company.

Some of my more recent accomplishments include:

- Led development and marketing of new product line which contributed an incremental \$1 million in earnings within the first eighteen months.
- Launched a new foodservice market pursuit for our commercial business, which improved earnings by \$2 million in 2008 and 2009.
- Led design and implementation of multi-segment market strategies, with development and marketing programs that improved product line value and synergy. These programs contributed to our bottom-line improvement in 2009.
- Led development of business strategy for environmental positioning on paper products.

A graduate of Santa Clara, I am an active member of the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association and past board member of the Foodservice Packaging Institute.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my experience and to examine ways I might add value to your business. I will be attending the NPTA show in Chicago should a meeting be appropriate at that time. Late next week I will contact you in the hope that we might meet in Chicago. In the meantime, I can be reached at (000) 000-0000.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Enclosure
© Meridian Resources, Inc., 2020

SAMPLE #5: TARGETED

April 23, 2020

Mr. James Meridian
Executive Vice President
ABC Company
123 Any Street
City, State 00000

Dear Mr. Meridian:

I saw the recent article in Trucking Age that mentioned your company is going to begin building a "new generation" of modern, lightweight trailers for heavy commercial use. I was very interested in your emphasis on streamlining to reduce wind drag and on your intention to use aluminum, stainless steel, and composite resin fabrication in building these trailers.

I have a great deal of expertise in such fabrications and I am writing to see if there might be a contribution I could make to Werner International in connection with these new trailers.

My background has been in high-technology, high-stress commercial and recreational shipbuilding. However, you probably will need people experienced in the latest resins, coring materials and carbon-based lay-ups.

I have over ten years of experience working in these areas for Sun Ship and Atlas in New York. I also have managed and trained technical staff in working in E-glass, S-glass, and conventional resins. I am sure my skills and experience could be put to use in the building of relatively low-stress commercial trailers.

I will follow up with you in a few days to see if my background and skills might be of use to Werner International as it goes into this new area. In the meantime, you may reach me at (000) 000-0000.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Enclosure

SAMPLE #6: FOLLOW UP TO NETWORKING MEETING

April 23, 2020

Mr. James Meridian
Executive Vice President
ABC Company
123 Any Street
City, State 00000

Dear James:

It was a pleasure to meet with you today. I am grateful for the time you took out of your busy schedule to assist me in my job search.

I was most intrigued by your views on management during the two thousands and have bought Tom Peter's latest book that you mentioned. I'm sure I will find it fascinating as well. I have contacted Ruth O'Connor, and Walter Bench, and both have agreed to meet with me next week. I will let you know how those meetings turn out.

I would like to keep you abreast of my progress during my search. Thanks again for your kind help and support. After I land my next position, I hope to reciprocate in some way.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

SAMPLE #7: FOLLOW UP TO AN INTERVIEW

April 23, 2020

Mr. James Meridian
Executive Vice President
ABC Company
123 Any Street
City, State 00000

Dear Mr. Meridian:

I very much enjoyed our meeting and the opportunity it gave me to understand your requirements for the Vice President of Marketing position.

You emphasized the importance of your plans for the energy market. I hope that my account of how I managed the rate increases in this area demonstrated my capabilities. You also referred to the importance of working smoothly with the functions of manufacturing and R&D and, as I indicated, at XYZ Corporation I established good relations with these functions, with the result that we were able to develop the required products, achieving sales of over \$200 million.

The demand to influence the sales function without direct authority in that area presents no problem to me, because at XYZ I was able to achieve systematic selling without line authority over the people in the function.

I was very enthusiastic about your business plans, your growth objectives, and the sense of good teamwork in the ABC Company I got from our discussions.

As we agreed, I shall call you by mid-May if I have not heard from you by then. Certainly, I look forward to talking with you then.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

SAMPLE #8: ACCEPTANCE OF OFFER

April 23, 2020

Mr. James Meridian
Executive Vice President
ABC Company
123 Any Street
City, State 00000

Dear Mr. Meridian:

Please receive this letter as my formal acceptance of your employment offer. I am very excited to join the ranks at ABC Company, and I hope to quickly make a contribution to your qualified accounting staff.

Yesterday, I submitted a formal resignation notice to my current employer, and have arranged a start date of December 9th. I will contact you this week to confirm this date, and provide any additional information you might need.

In the interim, be assured of my enthusiasm to join ABC Company.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

SAMPLE #9: THANK YOU FOR LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

April 23, 2020

Mr. James Meridian
Executive Vice President
ABC Company
123 Any Street
City, State 00000

Dear James:

I appreciate the kind letter of recommendation you wrote to assist me in my job search. Yesterday, I received an offer to begin work as a Staff Accountant with XYZ Corporation. Your praise of my internship work at ABC Company definitely contributed to my success.

If there is anything I can do in return, please contact me. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

SAMPLE #10: JOB SEARCH COMPLETION UPDATE AND THANK YOU

April 23, 2020

Mr. James Meridian
Executive Vice President
ABC Company
123 Any Street
City, State 00000

Dear James:

I am pleased to let you know that after an extensive search, I have accepted a position at Williams & Marcus, in New Jersey. My challenge will be to administer the business affairs of this law firm so that the 26 partners and 23 associates can devote their time and talents to the practice of law on behalf of their clients.

I am particularly excited about this opportunity because it allows me to utilize a variety of finance, administration, human resources and general management skills I have acquired over the past 25 years.

Thank you again for your time and help during the past nine months. I particularly appreciate your support by putting me in touch with others to expand my network.

Beginning May 18th, I can be reached at:

Williams & Marcus
721 Route 406
Trenton, NJ 08601
Telephone: (000) 000-0000

Sincerely,

Your Full Name