

**CAREER EMPLOYMENT  
SERVICES**

**COVER LETTERS  
AND OTHER JOB  
SEARCH  
CORRESPONDENCE**

# The Purpose of a Cover Letter

These are all important points to prospective employers that your résumé can not always express.

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

## Getting started...

**Address the letter to a specific individual.** Call to request the name and title of the person responsible for hiring college graduates in your career areas. “Dear Sir or Madam” is no longer considered proper in professional correspondence. Some people are offended by being called “Madam.” Contemporary literature suggests deleting the salutation when you do not know whom you are addressing. You may direct the letter to someone with a specific job title, such as Director of Editorial Services, or simply begin the letter without a salutation.

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

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

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

**Inform employers of your intention to contact them within a specific period of time** (such as a week, 10 days, two weeks). Then, be sure to carry out the follow-up action you mention. It’s a good idea to tell the employer how to reach you during business hours.

**Match your stationery and résumé in size, weight, and shade. Also, do not exceed one page.** You are trying to get their attention in an organized and concise manner.

**Don’t forget to sound positive and confident!**



# ***The Structure of the Cover Letter***

*Your Street Address*  
*City, State Zip Code*  
Date

(Space down four spaces)

Mr./Ms. Recruiter's Full Name  
Recruiter's Title  
Department Name  
Company Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name Only,

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

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

The third paragraph states **why you are right for this job**. Use this paragraph to demonstrate your knowledge of the employer and their goals. Tell them why you should be considered for the position you are applying for. A little bit of homework on the company or the industry can really pay off by showing the employer that you are serious about your application, and informed about the type of work and experience that it requires.

The closing paragraph states **what you will do next** (such as calling to arrange an appointment at the employer's convenience) or what you would like the recipient of the letter to do next. Request action. Ask for an interview. Inform the employer when you will make contact with them again. Either here, or in your closing, thank the employer for their time.

Sincerely,

*Your Signature Here*

Your Name Typed Name

Enclosure(s) (This indicates that your résumé and/or additional materials are enclosed.)

# Sample Cover Letter

9781 College Street  
Springfield, MO 65807  
April 20, 20--

Ms. Laura Liu, Web Manager  
Amazon.com  
P.O. Box 6898  
Seattle, Washington 98961

*The cover letter, sometimes called an application letter, serves as an introduction to your résumé, highlighting specific qualifications or objectives, and exhibiting written communication skills. It can also include additions to the résumé that specifically match the job description. Your cover letter and résumé should not contain contradictions.*

Dear Ms. Liu,

While researching information on Amazon.com, I discovered an opening in the web development department as a web designer. Upon graduation from Ozarks Technical Community College this May with a degree in Internet Application Development, I would like to use the knowledge, skills and experience to promote Internet businesses like yours.

I have had extensive experience in web design, along with writing creatively in the corporate world. However, my true interest lies in how to merge innovative writing with cutting-edge technology. For the past year, I have been working in the web development office at Ozarks Technical Community College improving the content of the web site. In addition to my online experience, I have also worked for an e-commerce business located in Springfield. I am confident that I could bring creativity, grace-under-pressure, and style to the job.

I understand that Amazon.com has been on the forefront of technology since its beginning in 1995. With my flair for the creative and my ability to reach a rainbow of readers, I am well-suited to help your company expand well into the millennium. Your mission to transform Internet buying into the fastest, easiest, and most enjoyable experience possible is one that I could substantially aid with my web design experience.

More importantly, though, a letter and résumé can only tell you so much about my motivations and qualifications. I would like to discuss my background with you in person and would be willing to travel to Seattle at my own expense to do so. I'll call you at the end of next week to discuss whether such a meeting would be possible and to confirm that you have received my enclosed résumé and portfolio.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Harper Smith*

Enclosure

# Sample Application Letter

1225 Sherman Ave.  
Springfield, MO 65809  
April 20, 20--

Ms. Mary Kay Nelson  
Manager of Human Resources  
Continental Industries, Inc.  
2900 Rosemont Blvd.  
Rosemont, MO 60018

*An **application letter** is used to generate job interviews. Use this type of letter to respond to specific openings. You want to demonstrate that you have the skills and qualifications required for the position.*

Dear Ms. Nelson:

I am applying for the web developer position that was advertised with Ozarks Technical Community College Career Employment Services this week. The position seems to fit very well with my education, experience, and career interests.

Your position requires skills in various types of programming and software used in web development. My academic program in computer studies emphasized C, C++, Visual Basic, Assembler, Java, and SQL. In addition, I have extensive experience in using several software packages in web development, including Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, After Effects, and Dreamweaver. My experience as a department computer consultant gave me exposure to PC (Windows 2000, NT, XP) and Macintosh platforms as well as Novell and NT LANs. Additionally, I worked as a summer intern in computing operations for a local newspaper where I gained knowledge of enterprise systems and e-commerce operations. My enclosed résumé provides more details on my qualifications.

My background and career goals seem to match your job requirements well. I'm confident that I can perform the job effectively. Furthermore, I am genuinely interested in the position and in working for Continental Industries, Inc. Your firm has an excellent reputation and comes highly recommended to me.

Would you please consider my request for a personal interview to discuss my qualifications and to learn more about this opportunity? I will call you next week to see if a meeting can be arranged. Should you need to reach me, please feel free to contact me at 417/683-4388 or [mlopez@otc.edu](mailto:mlopez@otc.edu).

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely yours,

*Marisa Lopez*

# Sample Prospecting Letter

1600 Sherman Ave., #301  
Springfield, MO 65802  
April 20, 20--

Mr. Brent Newman  
Director of College Recruiting  
Gray Construction Company  
4500 Randolph Drive  
Chicago, IL 60601

*A prospecting letter is used to prospect or search for possible openings and generate job interviews. This type of letter is used most often in long-distance searches and focuses on broader qualifications that match the work environment.*

Dear Mr. Newman:

I read your company's description in NACE's *Job Choices for Science, Engineering, & Technology Students* and would like to inquire about employment opportunities in your civil engineering department. I want to work in the engineering field and would like to move to the Chicago area after graduation.

I shall receive my AAS degree in Drafting and Design Technology from Ozarks Technical Community College this May. My interest in engineering started in high school when I attended a student Introduction to Engineering program at a local university in my hometown. This interest further developed through a variety of construction jobs during college. My internship with a construction company in my hometown convinced me to pursue this field. When I researched the top construction firms in Chicago, Gray Construction emerged as having a strong market position, an excellent training program, and a solid reputation. In short, you provide the kind of professional environment I seek.

My résumé is enclosed for your consideration. My education and experience match the qualifications you seek, but they don't tell the whole story. I know from supervisor feedback that I have the technical and interpersonal skills you seek. My relatively extensive experience gives me confidence in my career direction and in my abilities to perform competently.

You must have many demands on your time, but I would appreciate a few minutes of your time. I plan to call you during the week of May 4 to discuss employment possibilities. In the meantime, if you need to contact me, my number is 417/491-8843 and my e-mail is [jchen@otc.edu](mailto:jchen@otc.edu).

Thank you very much for considering my request. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

*Jeff Chen*

# Sample Networking Letter

*A **networking letter** is used to create informational interviews, not job interviews. It can open doors with employers to conduct job market research, define career goals and discover vacancy information within an industry or geographic location. Usually, a résumé is not attached to this document.*

543 State St.  
Springfield, MO 65803  
April 20, 20--

Jessica Hudson, M.S.N.  
Missouri Institute of Health  
10 Center Drive  
Mount Vernon, MO 65708

Dear Ms. Hudson:

Dr. Charlotte Cook, instructor of practical nursing at Ozarks Technical Community College, suggested that I contact you. She thought that, as a former graduate, you would be in an excellent position to assist me with a career decision.

As a nursing student, I am exploring which career environment to pursue. Hospital, physician's office, and public health nursing environments all sound interesting to me at this point, but I want to go into my campus interviews next semester with a clear sense of direction. I would like to get your advice on the long-term career implications of each path.

Next week I will call you to see if we can arrange a brief meeting at your convenience. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

*Ashley Harrison*

Ashley Harrison

## **Sample Thank-You Letter**

8976 E Independence  
Springfield MO 65804  
April 20, 20--

Dr. Franklin Watson, Director  
Technical Design Group  
Midwest Engineering Systems, Inc.  
1220 Warwick Ave.  
Strafford, MO 64531

*A **thank-you or follow-up letter** is one of the most important job search tools you can utilize. It is used to express your appreciation and strengthen your chances of being hired by a company. If possible, it should be sent within 24 hours of an interview. A letter should also be sent to anyone who helped you in the job search process. If that is not possible, request that your appreciation be extended to the entire group you met during the interview.*

Dear Dr. Watson:

Thank you very much for interviewing me yesterday for the associate drafter position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your research and design work.

My enthusiasm for the position and my interest in working for MES were strengthened as a result of the interview. My education and cooperative education experiences fit nicely with the job requirements, and I am sure that I'll make a significant contribution to the firm over time.

I want to reiterate my strong interest in the position and in working with you and your staff. You provide the kind of opportunity I seek. Please feel free to contact me at 417-685-5555 or [rrameriz@aol.com](mailto:rrameriz@aol.com) if I can provide you with any additional information.

Again, thank you for the interview and your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Robert Rameriz*

Robert Rameriz

# ***Sample Acceptance Letter***

2468 Freedom Rd  
Mansfield MO 65742  
April 20, 20--

*An **acceptance letter** is used to accept a position and confirm the terms of employment. You usually send this letter following a telephone conversation offering you the position. It helps reinforce the employer's decision to hire you.*

Mr. Jack Walinski, Division Manager  
Data International Corporation  
1212 Corporation Lane  
Northbrook, IL 60022

Dear Mr. Walinski:

I'm writing to confirm my acceptance of your employment offer of April 20 and to tell you how delighted I am to be joining Data International in Northbrook. The work is exactly what I have prepared to perform and hoped to do. I feel confident that I can make a significant contribution to the corporation, and am grateful for the opportunity you have given me.

As we discussed, I will report to work at 8:00 a.m. on July 1 and will have completed the medical examination and drug testing by the start date. Additionally, I will complete all employment and insurance forms for the new employee orientation.

I look forward to working with you and your fine team. I appreciate your confidence in me and am very happy to be joining your staff.

Sincerely,

*Andrea Nguyen*

Andrea Nguyen

# ***Sample Withdrawal Letter***

13579 Edison Ave  
Bolivar MO 64587  
April 20, 20--

Ms. Melinda Long  
Director, Human Resources  
Irvine Regional Hospital  
8989 Wagner Rd.  
Irvine, CA 92618

*A **withdrawal letter** should be sent to a potential employer if you accept another job offer. You have an ethical responsibility to let that company know of your decision. You should thank them for considering you as a candidate. **DO NOT say that you obtained a better job than the one they were offering to you.***

Dear Ms. Long:

I am writing to inform you that I am withdrawing my application for the physical therapist assistant position. As I indicated in my interview with you, I've been exploring several employment possibilities. This week I was offered a position with a local hospital and, after careful consideration, I decided to accept it. The position provides a very good match for my interests at this point in my career.

Thank you very much for interviewing and considering me for your position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning about your hospital. Best wishes to you and your staff.

Sincerely,

*Hannah Fox*

Hannah Fox

# ***Sample Rejection Letter***

*A rejection letter may be used to decline employment offers that do not fit your objectives and interests. You should be thoughtful when choosing the proper words to create this document. Indicate that you have given careful consideration to your decision not to accept the position. Be sure to thank the employer.*

1216 Emerson St.  
Battlefield, MO 65741  
April 20, 20--

Mr. Greg Dupont, Senior Chemist  
Ciba Specialty Chemicals Corp.  
1700 Colonial Parkway  
Williamsburg, VA 23176

Dear Mr. Dupont:

Thank you very much for offering me the position of electronics technician with Ciba Specialty Chemicals Corp. I appreciate your discussing the details of the position with me and giving me time to consider your offer.

You have a fine organization and there are many aspects of the position that are very appealing to me. However, I believe it is in our mutual best interests that I decline your kind offer. This has been a difficult decision for me, but I believe it is the appropriate one for my career at this time.

Thank you again for the consideration and courtesy given to me. It was a pleasure meeting you and your fine staff.

Sincerely,

*Melanie Thomas*

Melanie Thomas

## ***Power Phrases***

***Consider using adaptations of these key phrases in a cover letter prior to face-to-face meetings.***

I have attached my résumé for your review. I would appreciate any feedback you may have regarding effectiveness and strength. I understand you may not have any searches underway that would be suitable for me at this time, but I would appreciate any future considerations.

I look forward to discussing my background and the position with you in greater detail.

I'm seeking an opportunity to join a company that can benefit from my expertise and experience while offering me a challenging work environment and continued professional growth, as well as commensurate compensation.

If you feel that any of the strengths outlined in my résumé could make a valuable contribution to your organization, please contact me at your convenience to discuss my qualifications.

***Consider using adaptations of these key phrases in a follow-up/thank you letter after face-to-face meetings.***

In addition to experiencing a very enjoyable and informative interview, I came away very enthusiastic about the position you are seeking to fill within your organization.

It was a pleasure meeting with you yesterday in your office. I appreciate the time you spent with me, as well as the valuable information you offered during the interview.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the interview today. I was very impressed with the operation, and I am enthusiastic about the prospects of joining your team.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the interview this morning, and to express my strong interest in the position of (*title*) with (*company*).

Since you are going to reach a decision quickly, I would like to mention the following points, which I feel qualify me for the job we discussed:

From our conversation, I feel confident in my ability to reach and exceed your expectations.

**Special Thanks To:**  
**Career Employment Services**  
**Employer Partnership Committee Members**

**Citizens Memorial Hospital**

Jeremy MacLaughlin

**City of Springfield**

Josh Putman

**City Utilities**

Debbie Kreider

**Durham Company**

Jenny Carr

**KY-3**

Sarah LeMoyne

**O'Reilly Automotive**

Stephanie Evans

**St. John's Health System**

Alan Dixon

**Silver Dollar City**

Katy Cameron

**SRC**

Travis Morrison

**Wal-Mart**

John Waters