



Cover Letters and Thank You Notes

Anytime a resume is sent by mail it must be accompanied by a cover letter. The resume is an impersonal description of your qualifications, much like a product brochure. The cover letter is your opportunity to personalize your resume and target your skills to that specific employer.

The effective jobseeker will not send the same resume for each new job opportunity. Resumes need to be tailored for each position. Likewise, the same cover letter cannot be used in every situation. It also must be customized for each opportunity. There are a variety of cover letter formats, some of which are described below. Whatever format you use, be sure the letter conforms to acceptable standards for business letters.

Cover Letter Formats

Invited

Use the invited format whenever an employer has asked for a resume. This is often in response to a classified ad or publicized job listing. This style focuses on matching your qualifications to the advertised requirements of the position.

Uninvited or Cold-Contact

Use the uninvited format to contact employers who haven't advertised or published job openings. The focus is on

matching your qualifications to the perceived needs of the employer based on labor market research. This strategy requires that a phone or personal contact with the employer either precede or follow the sending of the resume and cover letter.

Referral

Use the referral format to contact employers to whom you've been referred. The effective jobseeker will receive referrals to many job opportunities through networking and informational interviews. The referral may be to a specific job opening (advertised or unadvertised) or to an employer who may not be hiring. In a referral letter the individual who provided the referral is mentioned in the letter.

Job Match or "T"

It's always important to match your qualifications to the job and/or employer in the cover letter. This is generally done as part of the body of the letter. In the "T" letter format this is done as bullet points targeting the specific requirements and your corresponding qualifications. Some sources for information to help you match your qualifications include: employment advertisements, company websites, position descriptions, phone conversations with the employer and informational interviews.

Dear Mr./Ms. _____:

First Paragraph: State the reason for writing. Name the specific position or type of work for which you're applying. Mention how you learned of the opening.

Second Paragraph: Explain why you're interested in working for this employer and specify how you're PERFECT for this position. Don't repeat the information on your resume. Include something special or unique about yourself that will benefit the employer. Remember, the reader will consider this an example of your writing skills.

Third Paragraph: Mention your resume is enclosed and indicate your desire to meet with the employer. You may want to suggest alternate dates and times, or simply advise them of your flexibility to the time and place. Include day and evening contact information. Include a statement or question that will encourage the reader to respond. Be sure to communicate your plan to follow-up. You might state that you'll be in the area on a certain date and would like to set up a meeting, or you'll call on a certain date to set up a meeting. Finally, thank the employer for his/her time.

Sincerely,

Cover Letters and
Thank You Notes



Cover Letter

Points to Consider

- Whenever possible, address the cover letter to a specific person by name and title. This requires a minimum of research that will ultimately pay off in more interviews. The only time this may not be possible is when responding to a “blind ad” where there is no way to know the name of the company to research. In this case, send the letter to the title of the appropriate hiring manager, e.g., “Production Manager,” “Maintenance Supervisor,” “Office Manager,” etc. Never use the phrase “To Whom It May Concern.”
- Consider signing the letter in blue ink. It implies the letter is original. The only other ink color to use is black. Never use any other color on the cover letter.
- Structure the cover letter to reflect your individuality, but avoid appearing too familiar, overbearing, humorous or cute. Keep sentences short and to the point.
- Keep the cover letter brief, usually no more than three to five paragraphs on one page.
- The paper and style of your cover letter should compliment your resume. You might consider using the same paper stock for both your cover letter and resume.

they have extended themselves in any way on behalf of your job search. At the minimum, a written thank you should be sent after all interviews.

Thank you letters and notes should be standard tools in your job search. The thank you letter should follow a standard business letter format while the note may be a simple handwritten note or card. Which to send depends upon the situation and your personal style.

Thank You Letter

Points to Consider

- Be brief and to the point.
- When thanking a potential employer, restate your interest in the position and the company.
- Always plan your follow-up. Make it a point to tell the person when and how they can expect to hear from you in the future.
- If there are multiple people involved, such as with a panel interview, be sure to thank each person. Send one letter to each person or send a single letter to a key person for distribution. When sending more than one thank you letter, it is very effective to vary each one.
- Always send a written thank you to a person by name.
- The thank you is an opportunity to restate your qualifications. Include any pertinent information you failed to mention earlier. Be sure to reemphasize your skills and abilities.

Basic Parts of a Thank You

- Statement of appreciation for the interview.
- Expression of interest in employment.
- Brief restatement of qualifications.
- Final “Thank You.”
- Date and time you’ll follow-up.



Sample Thank You Note

Dear Mr. Jones,

Thank you for the interview for the accountant position today. I appreciate the information you shared with me and enjoyed meeting Ms. Smith from the Accounting Department.

My interest in working for Lord’s Industries is stronger than ever, and based on your description of the position, I know I can do a good job for you.

I will contact you by Tuesday of next week to learn of your decision.

Sincerely,

Thank You Letters and Notes

“Thank you” is a powerful statement that is seldom heard. Every thank you is an opportunity to sell your qualifications and to leave a fresh impression in the mind of the reader. Send a thank you letter or note to employers and employment contacts whenever

For additional job search assistance,
contact your local Minnesota WorkForce Center.



www.deed.state.mn.us

1.888.GET JOBS (1.888.438.5627)

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