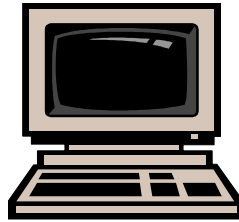


Dynamic Job Search Letters



A Guide to Communicating Your Potential Through Writing

This guide will assist you to:

- **Understand the need of professional job search letters**
- **Introduce the different types of job search letters**
- **Make suggestions for your writing style**
- **Provide samples of the different types of job search letters**
- **Outline tips of E-style job search letters**



Career Connection

The logo for Career Connection features the text "Career Connection" in a bold, sans-serif font. Above the text is a grey, curved line that resembles a smile, and below the text is a red, curved line that also resembles a smile.

The Ohio State University
Younkin Success Center
1640 Neil Avenue, 2nd Floor
(614) 688-3898
www.ccs.ohio-state.edu/career-connection

Rev. 10/2002

DYNAMIC JOB SEARCH LETTERS

“By carefully considering the purposes and impact of every letter you write, you can enhance your employability.” -William J. Banis

NEED OF JOB SEARCH LETTERS

- Effective letters are part of a larger career planning and job-search process.
- Job search letters need to communicate your potential to future employers.
- They tell a prospective employer what you can do and why you feel you are qualified.

TYPES OF JOB SEARCH LETTERS

- Cover letters
- Thank You letter
- Acceptance letter
- Decline Job Offer letter
- Withdrawal letter
- Follow-up to Rejection letter

COVER LETTERS

- The purpose of a cover letter is to tell a prospective employer what you can do for them and why you feel you are qualified.
- It is an opportunity to demonstrate your writing skills and to open a window to your personality.
- A good-well planned cover letter is just as important as an impressive resume, and together they form an important resource in your job search campaign.

Keys to Effective Cover Letters

- Tell the employers what you can do for the company, instead of what the company can do for you.
- Find out about the employer’s needs, then emphasize what you can do to meet their needs. Customizing your letters in this way demonstrates that you have done your homework, and on a general level, that you are not one to take short cuts. Plus, by researching the company/organization, you will benefit by gaining the information needed to assess if you would likely be satisfied working for such an employer.
- Consider how your work experience, education, and/or personal qualities would be helpful to the employer.

3 Types of Cover Letters



> *Application Letters:*

- Used to get your resume read and generate interviews.
- Used to respond to job advertisements and demonstrate that your qualifications fit the position.
- Link major job dimensions with your related past performance, experience, interests, and education.



> *Initiating Contact:*

- Used to get your resume read and generate interviews.
- Used to be considered for future openings or openings that haven't been advertised.
- Focus on broader occupational and/or organizational dimensions to describe how your qualifications match the work environment.



> *Networking Letters:*

- Used to generate informational interviews- not job interviews.
- Allows you to meet individuals who can give you specific information about your intended career.
- Is often misused as a way to seek employment, however it can help to uncover vacancy information in an industry.
- Normally, a resume is not attached to a networking letter, but it may be presented during the interview itself to help the interviewer address your questions.
- Follow-up with this letter within 48 hours, before it gets lost in a stack of papers or delegated for a formal letter response. If it is unsuccessful, ask them to recommend someone who can.

Writing Style- Cover Letter



- It's addressed to a specific individual.
- It's grabs the reader's attention in the first paragraph.
- It sounds confident without being arrogant.
- It's no longer than one page.
- It answers the question: "Why should we hire you?"
- It's action oriented.
- It uses the first person ("I") sparingly.

Although there is a general format to follow when writing a cover letter, which is provided on the next page, you'll want to phrase your thoughts so they sound like *you*. Nothing turns off an employer faster than getting a letter that looks like the same one every other employer is receiving

COVER LETTER FORMAT

Your Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Date

Name of Person
Job Title
Company/Organization
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Dr./Ms./Mrs. XXXXXXXXXX:

FIRST PARAGRAPH: The beginning of your letter should catch the reader's attention, but avoid catchy phrases and gimmicks. Also, tell why you are writing (e.g., name the specific position or type of work for which you are applying) and mention the resource used in finding out about the opening or company/organization. Introduce your second paragraph.

SECOND PARAGRAPH: Explain why you are interested in working for that employer or in that field of work, and most importantly, what your qualifications are (e.g., academic background/training, work experience, personal skills). Point out achievements that relate to the field in which you are applying, without duplicating exactly what is included in your resume.

THIRD PARAGRAPH: Refer the reader to the enclosed resume or other application instrument. Indicate that your resume summarizes your qualifications and background. Include any additional information that you think it is relevant for your future employer to know.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Indicate your desire for an interview. State that you will call on a specific day to see if an interview can be arranged at this person's convenience. If you will be in the geographic vicinity on a certain day, stress the importance of setting up an interview on that day.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Enclosure

(This sample letter is taken from Steele, J.E. & Morgan, M.S. (1998). *Career Planning and Development for College Students and Recent Graduates*. Lincolnwood, IL: VGM Career Horizons)

SAMPLE OPENINGS

Summary of Your Outstanding Qualifications

With four years of progressively responsible experience in journalism, I have developed many skills including writing and publishing articles, copy-editing, and investigative reporting.

Name of a Mutual Acquaintance

Professor R.J. Smith has informed me that your firm is looking for an accountant who is fluent in Spanish. I hope my qualifications fulfill your needs so you can end your search.

News Item Opening

A recent Columbus Dispatch article described your plans to open a branch office in Columbus. If these plans include expanding your staff of systems administrators, please consider my qualifications which I've highlighted below.

Question Opening

Does your company lose business because of weak sales administration procedures? Do all of your orders get to your customers on a timely basis? The enclosed resume describes a professional Sales Administrator who can increase your volume while still effectively meeting the needs of your customers.

Replying to a Job Listing

My outgoing personality, sales experience, and recently completed education make me a strong candidate for the Insurance Broker position advertised in the April 28th issue of Business First.

APPLICATION LETTER: RESPONDING TO AN AD

1090 Peachtree Lane
Columbus, OH 43210

October 5, 2002

Ms. Judy Sumner
Columbus Board of Education
45 Memorial Parkway
Columbus, OH 43210

Dear Ms. Sumner:

I am writing to apply for the primary school teacher as advertised in the Sunday, September 28, 2002 edition of the Atlanta Constitution. I'm a versatile teacher, ready to substitute if necessary, as early as next week. I have the teaching experience you specify as well as the computer skills you desire.

As you will see on my enclosed resume, I am presently affiliated with a highly regarded private elementary school. Mr. Craig, the principal, will certainly give you a good reference. The details of your job posting suggest that the position will involve many of the same responsibilities that I currently perform. For example, I have created and implemented lessons plans for children ages 7-9 and have used a variety of individual and group techniques to approach the learning process. In particular, I have acquired expertise in teaching mathematics and computer skills. I recently designed an in-house training program to instruct our faculty on classroom applications of the Internet.

In addition to my teaching and computer skills highlighted in my resume, please note that I also have experience with student-parent counseling duties. I have a master's degree in education as well as a teaching certificate from the state of Ohio and am confident that my skills will serve your primary school in a very professional way.

If you agree upon reviewing my resume that I am the teacher you need, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you how my qualification can benefit your institution. You can call me at 404/235-3030 or e-mail me to Long.345@dsu.edu Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cordially,

Maria Long
404/235-3030

Enclosure

INITIATING CONTACT

North Dormitory, R-36
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47401

December 10, 2002

Mr. Joseph Smith
Industrial Relations Manager
ABC Manufacturing Company
1906 Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60604

Explains why you are writing and how you learned about the opportunity

Dear Mr. Smith:

Since your company is not scheduled to recruit at Indiana University this year, our Placement Director suggested that I write to you directly about employment opportunities. Your company's record of positive relations with labor unions and its commitment to environmental issues is very impressive.

I will be graduating this Spring with a B.S. degree in Human Resources and am interested in joining a manufacturing company. My work experience includes two summers as a laborer and an internship as a personnel aid with Indiana's Department of Administrative Services.

This paragraph summarizes your qualifications

Points to your achievements and why you are interested in the company/organization

Enclosed is a resume summarizing my qualifications. My college training and work experience stimulated a career interest in helping management and labor to work more effectively with one another. My professors and employers have told me that I have a natural talent for this type of work, and my industrial relations courses have given me the most satisfaction.

I plan to be in Chicago from January 6th to 10th. If this is a good time for you, it would be great to have the opportunity to meet with you to examine more specifically how my interests and experience might be beneficial to your company. I will call your office within the next week so we can discuss the possibility of meeting.

Be assertive and indicate your desire to interview and show how you will take action to follow-up with the organization

Sincerely,
Bruce R. Bates
(812) 555-452
bates.98@rse.edu

Encl.

ASKING FOR AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

120 King Avenue, #3
Columbus, OH 43201

January 22, 2002

Ms. Linda Charity
Director of Public Relations
United Way
360 South 3rd Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Points to how you learned about the organization and why you are interested

Dear Ms. Charity:

While researching the field of public relations, I discovered your name in the *Partners in Education* directory that is maintained by OSU. I will complete my Bachelor's degree in Visual Communication Design this June, and am interested in exploring professions that involve working with print media as well as identifying potential employment opportunities.

My course work has helped me to see that there are several possible directions my career could take. You could help me considerably by sharing your perspectives about the demand within the field of public relations for people with visual design skills. Any

Show how you take initiative by calling to set up the meeting

information you could provide about identifying job openings in the field

Clearly explains what you want from the meeting

would also be greatly appreciated.

I will contact your office within the next week to arrange a convenient time for us to meet. Given your busy schedule, I would understand if you prefer to schedule a phone appointment instead of meeting in-person.

Sincerely,

Josh Ryan
(614) 261-1414
e-mail Ryan.89@prf.aol

.....

THANK YOU LETTER

- It is used to establish goodwill.
- To express appreciation.
- To strengthen your candidacy.
- Is one of the most important letters, yet the least used tools in a job search.

Keys to an Effective Thank you Letter

- Rule of thumb: Everyone who helps you in any way gets one.
- Should be sent within 24 hours to everyone who interviewed you.
- Send thank-you letters to your contacts who granted informational interviews.
- Send thank-you letters to people who provided references.



Writing Style: Thank You Letter

- Express your appreciation for the opportunity to interview and for the interviewer's time and attention.
- Explain how you see yourself fitting in the organization.
- Show your enthusiasm for the job and working in the organization.
- Be upbeat and positive.

ACCEPTANCE LETTER

- Use this letter to accept a job offer.
- An acceptance letter follows a telephone conversation during which the details of the offer and the terms of employment have been discussed.



Writing Style: Acceptance Letter

- Confirm the terms of your employment (salary, starting date, summary of responsibilities, medical examination, benefits etc).
- Positively reinforce the employer's decision to hire you.

DECLINE JOB OFFER LETTER

- Used to decline employment offers that do not fit the career or interests of the candidate.
- Rejecting an employment offer should be done thoughtfully.



Writing Style: Decline Job Offer Letter

- Indicate that you have carefully considered the offer and have decided not to accept it.
- Be sure to thank the employer for the offer and for consideration of you as a candidate.

WITHDRAWAL LETTER

- Used once you have accepted another position.
- Used to withdraw your employment application from further consideration.
- Used as an ethical obligation to inform all other employers of your decision not to continue.



Writing Style: Withdrawal Letter

- Express your appreciation for the employer's consideration and courtesy.
- State that your decision to go with another organization was based on having better person-job fit for this stage in your career.
- DO NOT say that you obtained a better job.

FOLLOW-UP TO REJECTION LETTER

- Used to follow-up with an employer, once you know that you didn't get the job that was expected.
- Express your appreciation for the time and consideration given to your candidacy.
- State that you would like to be considered for future positions as they become available.

THANK YOU LETTER

413 Violet Way
Encino, CA 91316

May 29, 2002

Mrs. Paulette Load
Fund Manager
Toro Investments
300 Oak Street
Los Angeles, CA

Dear Mrs. Load:

Thank you for your courtesy and the generous amount of time you gave to our meeting yesterday. Your explanation of the roles played by Financial Analysts in your company was very informative. As the interview progressed, I became more and more energized discussing the challenges faced by Toro Investments and relating how my experiences would enable me to meet those challenges.

Again, thank you for the pleasant and informative interview. Please advise if there is any further information you require regarding my application materials. I look forward to hearing from you. It would be a pleasure to work for you and Toro Investments.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Hardy
(818) 386-1414

ACCEPTANCE LETTER

4745 Lafayette Drive
South Bend, IN 56345

January 21, 2002

Al Kemmy, Ph.D.
Department Chair, Chemistry
243 Longhorn Laboratory
University of Texas
Austin, TX 78705

Dear Dr. Kemmy:

I am pleased to accept the position of Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemistry. The faculty seem very committed to providing quality instruction and increasing the national rankings of the department's graduate programs. I look forward to becoming a part of these improvement efforts.

My present contract at Notre Dame will end May 30, 2002. It is my understanding that my appointment in your department will begin on August 1, 2002 and extend through July 31, 1998 at the rate of \$36,000 annually. As we discussed, I will need to take two days of vacation at the beginning of August to return to Notre Dame for my dissertation defense meeting.

Thank you for the time and advice that you shared during the interview process. I am encouraged by the interest you have expressed in my research, and look forward to continuing our discussions about the department's curriculum changes.

Sincerely,

Lana Smith, M.S.
412-569-2563

cc. Search Committee
Ann Beaker, Ph.D.
Mark Bunsen, Ph.D.
Allen Petri, M.S.

DECLINE JOB OFFER LETTER

507 Shore Drive
Hampton, VA 23501

October 15, 2001

Mr. George Duvall, Manager
Sales and Marketing
1700 Colonial Properties, Ltd.
Williamsburg, VA 23176

Dear Mr. Duvall

Thank you very much for offering me the position of commercial leasing agent with Colonial Properties. 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 which are very appealing to me. However, I believe it is in our mutual best interest 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.

I want to thank you for the consideration and courtesy given to me. It was a pleasure meeting you and your fine staff.

Sincerely,

Theresa Cardenas
614-235-9685

WITHDRAWAL LETTER

4621 Chester Lane
Virginia Beach, VA 23466

March 17, 2002

Ms. Melissa Bliss, Executive Director
The Virginia School of Performing Arts
8989 Princess Anne Road
Virginia beach, VA 263465

Dear Ms. Bliss

I am writing to inform you that I am withdrawing my application for the program coordinator position with the school. As I indicated in my interview with you, I have been exploring several employment possibilities. This week I was offered an administrative position with a local government 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.

I want to thank you very much for interviewing and considering me for your position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning about the innovative community programs you are planning. You have a fine school and I wish you and your staff well.

Sincerely,

Emily Morgan
954- 231-5689

FOLLOW-UP TO REJECTION LETTER

1234 High Street
Cleveland, Ohio 4116

April 22, 2002

Karen L. Schotz
Regional Sales Manager
PQR Pharmaceuticals
2828 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115

Although disappointed that I did not get the job as a sales representative with your company, I appreciate the time you spent with me and the consideration given to my qualifications. As indicated during my interview, I believe PQR Pharmaceuticals is a great company and I wish you continued success in your position.

If a similar position should become available, I would appreciate the chance to compete for it.

Sincerely,

James Harris
(216) 248-8687

TIPS For Successful Job Search Letters

- Be sure to sign the original letters and to keep copies of all correspondence.
- Design your letters to be employer-centered not self-centered.
- Keep your reader in mind. Make your letter easy to read and attractive.
- Address your letters to a specific individual with his or her correct title and business address.
- Use high-quality stationery and envelopes.
- Keep the letter to one page.
- Produce error-free, clean copy.
- Tailor your letter to each situation. Generic mass-produced letters are unprofessional.
- Be timely. Demonstrate that you know how to do business.
- Be honest. Be able to back up your claims with evidence and examples from your experience
- **Allow your individuality to be expressed through your writing.**
- **You'll want to phrase your thoughts so that they sound like you.**
- **Nothing turns off an employer than getting a letter that looks the same as everyone else's.**

E-Style Your Job Search Letters

Quintessential Resumes and Cover Letters

by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D

Don't waste your subject line. Don't ever leave the subject line of your email blank, but don't waste it by just inserting the job number. Instead, use the subject line to entice the reader into your cover letter. For example, for a director of nursing position, say something such as: "experienced nurse for director of nursing position."

Your opening paragraph is critical. More than ever, your first paragraph has to be dynamic; you need to both hook the reader and then sell him or her on your abilities in that first paragraph.

Keep your cover letter short. Brevity is critical with an email cover letter. Focus on your key selling points. Most experts say that at most, your cover letter should be two to three paragraphs -- and under 150 words. The idea is that your cover letter should not be any longer than one screen in length.

Take advantage of keywords. Use keywords pertinent to the job you are seeking, and focus on key industry buzzwords and critical skills sets. Noun phrases become more important than action verbs. Because your cover letter may be filed into a database, using critical keywords will enhance the likelihood that your cover letter and resume will be retrieved in a future search.

Stick with plain styling (ASCII text). Write your cover letter in your favorite word processor, but strip away all formatting once you've completed editing it by saving the file as "plain text." Because some email packages allow you to manipulate font style, color, and size, make sure your email is also being sent in plain text -- black font, normal size and typeface (10 point, Arial, Helvetica, Times Roman), on a white background.

Check your line length. Make sure your lines are no more than 60 characters in length. Some email packages automatically do word wrap for you (much like word processing software), but you should check. You don't want your cover letter to arrive fragmented on multiple lines.

Always use standard cover letter protocol. Just because it's an email, doesn't mean you should abandon standard business letter writing guidelines. Thus, make sure to include a salutation (Dear Ms. Smith) and a standard closing (such as "sincerely"). Leave blank lines between paragraphs. And avoid the use of emoticons, abbreviations, wild colors, and other cool techniques and shortcuts used in everyday emails.

Don't bother with attachments (unless requested to do so). Some companies actually block all emails with attachments; thus, your email would never even be received if you used an attachment.

Always follow the company guidelines. Many companies now have career centers on their corporate Websites. It's better to take the time and check than to send something the company doesn't want.

Never hit "send" without thoroughly spell checking and proofreading your email letter. Don't just rely on your email software's spellchecker. Take the time to really proofread it. A simple typo could be the downfall of a brilliant cover letter. Avoid all mistakes.

Be sure to test your message before sending it to the company. Even if you're sure your letter is perfect, send it to a friend or another one of your email accounts first and check for the content and style one more time.

Don't submit a cover letter with an electronic resume that you send to an employment database. Cover letters are discarded from almost all the employment databases that accept resumes.

Your cover letter should immediately precede your electronic resume, with both in one e-mail mess.

Date: Tues, 15 May 2001 19:52:59 -0700 (EDT)
From: kevin lee smith [ksmith@yahoo.com]
Subject: Seasoned Sales Rep With MBA Ideal for Regional Sales Manager (mtt-01/3439)
To: scott.hent@marriott.com
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii

Dear Mr. Hent,

Having broken sales records and exceeded sales quotas in all my previous positions and recently completed my MBA in marketing from the Stern School of Managerial Leadership at Florida State University, I am an ideal candidate for the regional sales manager position at Marriott Vacation Club International.

As the leading sales representative for Disney Vacation Club, I developed key sales material, trained new sales reps, and reinvented the way club memberships are sold. My team's revenue was more than double the average for the entire operation.

The vacation club industry is a dynamic and growing industry, and I am convinced I can help Marriott grow its reputation and dominant position in the industry.

We should meet to discuss the position. I will contact you in the next 10 days to arrange an interview. Should you have any questions before that time, please feel free to call me at 904-555-2341 or email me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cordially,

Kevin Lee Smith

THANK YOU BY E-MAIL:

Writing a thank you note after an employment interview can be the key to getting a job offer. In these days of electronic communication, is it appropriate to send thank you letters by email? In most cases, yes. You can get your thank you letter out immediately, rather than have to wait for the postal service to deliver it. If the employer is making a quick hiring decision, time is of the essence. If there is no sense of urgency, you may still want to send a quick email thank you, along with a traditional letter or note. You'll be reiterating your interest in the position sooner rather than later. However, you will need to recognize what the company style is. If extensive e-mail was used during your job search with a particular company, then follow that suit, but if not, a traditional method will probably be the preferred style.