

Enhancing Professional and Personal Development

MAKING YOUR COVER LETTER COUNT



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CAREER Education. **CAREER** Experiences. **PRE-PROFESSIONAL** Advising.

The cover letter is a **fundamental** component of any job submission package, but not all employers necessarily value them. Nonetheless, many HR professionals feel that cover letters are **essential**. Recognizing that you do not know how the company receiving your resume will stand on this point, including a cover letter is **highly recommended** to make you stand out among other candidates.

A cover letter is usually the first thing the person screening your resume sees. It is your first chance to make a good impression. A well-researched cover letter enables you to:

- Draw parallels between qualifications the employer is seeking and your previous relevant work experiences, achievements and skills.
- Demonstrate, in ways that are impossible in a resume, your knowledge about the company you are writing to and its industry.
- It can include information to explain gaps in employment, a lack of direct experience in the field or anything else that might portray you as “unqualified” for the position.



Cover Letter Tips

Like your resume, every single word in your cover letter needs to serve a purpose and enhance your perceived value.

- Brief - three to four paragraphs
- Written with the goal of enticing the employer to continue on and review your resume
- Each cover letter needs to be customized based on the employer/job and based on what you have to offer

Vital elements to include in a cover letter:

- Attention grabbing first sentence
- Include where you found the job posting as many employers have several positions posted at a time
- Address the letter to a specific person, if you are able find the hiring manager’s name on LinkedIn, if not, it is acceptable to use Dear Hiring Manager:
- Use proper English and avoid slang or abbreviations
- Answer the questions: “why us?” and “why you?”
- End the letter with a call-to-action by indicating how you will follow-up

- If known, mention the name of a person that the recipient will know. If not, include a clear statement of what you want, including the benefits you bring to the position.

Other Recommendations:

- Choose a non-serif font style (Arial, Tahoma, or Verdana)
 - Between 10-12 pt.
- Edit, proofread and proofread some more
- Print your letter on good quality paper that matches your resume
- When sending electronically:
 - E-mail subject line should be attention grabbing
 - Put cover letter in body of e-mail and attach your resume

Avoid:

- Rehashing your resume – highlight relevant skills to the position without being redundant
- Talking about difficult personal situations
- Overusing “I”, “me” and “mine”
- Telling the employer what the company can do for you instead of what you can do for the company

Hard copy: sender address and contact info at top.

Your contact information should replicate your resume
Include First Name Last Name | phone number | email address| LinkedIn URL

Month, Day, Year

(1 space here)

(The number of spaces after the date are determined by the length of the letter.)

The company address and letter content should be centered vertically on the stationary.)

Mr./Ms./Dr. First Name Last Name or
Hiring Manger
Title
Name of Organization Street Address
City, State, Zip

(1 space here)

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. First Last Name or
Hiring Manager

(1 space here)

Subject: Insert Job title

Opening paragraph: State why you are writing; how you learned of the organization or position, and basic information about yourself. If applicable, mention the name of the person who referred you. **Example: Sarah Cummins, Promotion Director at Insight, Inc., suggested I contact you regarding the Research Assistant position. In light of the work your organization is now beginning to do with after school programs, I believe I will be able to contribute my expertise in this area in a research position due to my attention to detail, planning, and communication skills.**

(No indentations on paragraphs)

2nd paragraph: Tell why you are interested in the employer or type of work the employer does (Simply stating that you are interested does not tell why, and can sound like a form letter). Demonstrate that you know enough about the employer or position to relate your background to the employer or position. Mention specific qualifications which make you a good fit for the employer's needs. (Focus on what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.) This is an opportunity to explain in more detail relevant items in your resume. Refer to the fact that your resume is enclosed. Mention other enclosures if such are required to apply for a position. **Example: As my resume indicates, I was actively involved in public relations during my last two years in college. Through my internship, I had the opportunity to write press releases which I received outstanding recognition from my supervisor and the rest of my staff members. My experience coordinating press conferences has been greatly enhanced and I have a proven record of scheduling over 20 conferences with minimal supervision, resulting in positive feedback from attendees. I have exceptional communication skills and through my active listening, I have developed strong relationships and rapport with the local news media. I am confident I can put forth these same skills and succeed in your organization.**

(1 space here)

3rd paragraph: Indicate that you would like the opportunity to interview for a position or to talk with the employer to learn more about their opportunities or hiring plans. State what you will do to follow up, such as telephone the employer within two weeks. If you will be in the employer's location and could offer to schedule a visit, indicate when. State that you would be glad to provide the employer with any additional information needed. Thank the employer for her/his consideration. **Example: Recognizing that your schedule must be quite hectic, I will call you on Thursday, March 16 to see if we can arrange a time to review my qualifications in more detail. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 555-555-5555 or emailaddress@gmail.com Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.**

(1 space here)

Sincerely,

(Your **handwritten signature** [on hard copy])

(4 spaces here)

Your name typed

(In case of e-mail, your full contact info appears below your printed name [instead of at the top, as for hard copy], and of course there is no handwritten signature)

(2 spaces here)

Enclosure(s) (refers to resume, transcripts, writing samples.) *Example: Encl: Resume*

(Note: the contents of your letter might best be arranged into four paragraphs. Consider what you need to say and use good writing style.)

HARD COPY INTERNSHIP COVER LETTER

Betty Bluejay

(630) 123-4567 | bluejayb@365.elmhurst.edu | www.linkedin/in/bettybluejay/

January 23, 2020

Ms. Sylvia Range
Special Programs Assistant
DuPage County Family Court Wilderness
Challenge 303 Center Street
Wheaton, IL 60187

Subject: Wilderness Challenge internship position

Dear Ms. Range:

I am writing to express my interest in the Wilderness Challenge internship position posted on your organization's website. This is a dynamic and challenging internship where my leadership and counseling expertise can truly benefit your organization. While researching opportunities in the field of Sociology, I found that your program recently created an "at-risk youth" program. I have a strong passion to help others and know that I would be a great asset to this program.

My work background and coursework have supplied me with many skills and an understanding of dealing with the adolescent community; for example:

- Ten hours per week as a volunteer hotline assistant for a local intervention center. After a 50-hour training program, I counseled teenagers about personal concerns and referred them, when necessary, to appropriate professional services for additional help, resulting in 90% successfully completing their goals.
- Residence hall assistant in my residence hall, which requires me to establish rapport with fifty residents and advise them on personal matters, as well as university policies. Throughout my experience there, I have received multiple service awards from the university. In addition, I develop social and educational programs and activities each semester for up to 200 participants, resulting in positive feedback from surveys distributed at the end of the program.

My enclosed resume provides additional details about my background.

I will be in the DuPage area during my spring break, March 6-10. I will call you next week to see if it would be possible to meet with you in early March to discuss your program. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at 630-123-4567 or bluejayb@365.elmhurst.edu. I look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Sincerely,

(handwritten signature)

Betty Bluejay

Encl: Resume, Writing Sample

ELECTRONIC NEW GRAD COVER LETTER

Bart Prospect

630-513-5624 | bprospect@365.elmhurst.edu | www.linkedin.com/in/bartprospect/

March 15, 2020

Ms. Cora O'Connel
Director of Human Resources
Kraft Foods
Twin Lakes Drive, Suite 612
Hinsdale, IL 60589

Dear Ms. O'Connel:

Subject: Financial Analyst

Deana Martin, Promotion Assistant at Kraft, suggested I contact you regarding the Financial Analyst position in your Finance and Accounting Department. Kraft's reputation for ethical responsibility and customer service strongly align with my goals and values. The two internships secured during my college career working as an Accounting Intern with McDonald's Corporation and as an Operations Manager with the student-run Elmhurst University Credit Union have strengthened the following skills: Analytics, Quantitative, Communication, and Teamwork.

Below, I have included accomplishments that I have achieved while demonstrating these specific skill sets:

- Enhanced analytical approach in interpreting survey results by analyzing large complex data and performing case-effect analyses.
- Managed up to 650 invoices (\$10m) per month. Created over 350 monthly service entries (\$3m) on established orders.
- Partnered with higher management to lead and present at over 30 staff meetings; resulting in positive feedback from all team members.
- Received 5 Employee of the Month Awards for my wiliness to collaborate with all staff.

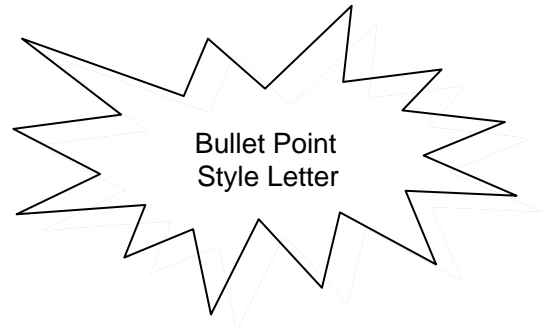
My enclosed resume provides additional details about my background.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications and your objectives. I will follow up with a phone call next week. Should you wish to contact me before then, I can be reached at 630-513-5624 or bprospect@365.elmhurst.edu. Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(Your first, middle initial, if applicable, and last name)

Encl: Resume

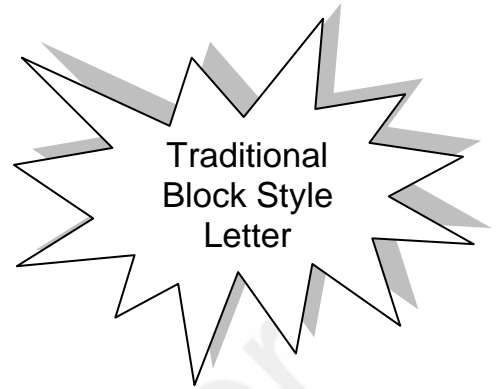


ELECTRONIC NEW GRAD COVER LETTER

Bart Prospect

630-513-5624 | bprospect@365.elmhurst.edu | www.linkedin.com/in/bartprospect/

August 3, 2020



Ms. Cora O'Connel
Director of Human Resources
Kraft Foods
Twin Lakes Drive, Suite 612
Hinsdale, IL 60589

Dear Ms. O'Connel:

Subject: Financial Analyst

Deana Martin, Promotion Assistant at Kraft, suggested I contact you regarding the Financial Analyst position in your Finance and Accounting Department. Through my education, I have gained excellent insights into the world of finance and strengthened my analytical and quantitative skills. In me, you'll find someone who is dedicated, self-motivated, and who possesses the detail-orientation and technical skills to excel in a fast-paced environment.

Currently, I am involved in a unique program at my school that sets me apart from other recent graduates who will apply to your firm. For the past year, I have been part of the Sawyer-Duncan Investment Program, the only undergraduate program in the Midwestern United States that allows students to invest real money in the stock and bond markets. The Sawyer-Duncan Program has enabled me to gain practical experience in portfolio management and has enhanced my communication and teamwork skills. I have also fine-tuned my research techniques to make the best stock and bond selections.

My enclosed resume provides additional details about my background.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to be included on your interviewing schedule. I will follow up next week with a phone call. Should you wish to contact me before then, I can be reached at 630-513-5624 or bprospect@365.elmhurst.edu. Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Sincerely,

(Your first, middle initial, if applicable, and last name)

Encl: Resume