

COVER LETTERS

A cover letter is an opportunity to tell a potential employer about yourself and share how your skills and experiences make you a solid candidate for their company/organization. Be sure to expand upon the information in your resume, not repeat it.

Tips:

CUSTOMIZE

- Take the time to write and send an original cover letter to each employer.

PROOFREAD

- Use the Career Center “Resume Review Drop Box” to have your cover letter reviewed.

BETTER TO OVER PREPARE

- Submit a cover letter with your resume to employers, even if it is not required.

KEEP A COPY

- Save a copy of each letter for your records.

FOLLOW-UP

- Contact the employer 7-14 days after submission to check the status.
- Ensure your first paragraph catches the reader’s attention and encourages them to continue reading
- Focus on how you meet an employer’s needs and not your personal story
- Keep your writing concise and less than one page in length (2-4 paragraphs)
- Avoid using adjectives that exaggerate your experience such as “exceptional” or “perfect”
- Cover letters serve as a sample of your writing and communication skills

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

LAYOUT AND FORMAT

- Font size is 12 and easy to read (Times New Roman or Arial)
- Margins are minimum .5 inch and maximum 1 inch
- No spelling or grammatical errors
- No use of acronyms
- Cover letter design is consistent with professional practice
- Cover letter, resume layout and format are consistent

GREETING

- Address the contact person as Mr., Ms., or Dr. if applicable
- Address cover letter to “Hiring Committee” if employer name is unknown

SIGNATURE

- Include valediction (closing)
- Your first and last name are used

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Place below your signature
- Includes phone number and email

COMPANY CONTACT INFORMATION

- Include employer’s first and last name
- Include employer’s position title, company name, and full address if known

OPENING PARAGRAPH

- State the full position title and company to which you are applying
- Reference how you found the position
- Summarize your intention and reason for your interest in the job and/or company

MIDDLE PARAGRAPHS

- State how your qualifications and experiences meet the needs of the position
- Mention specific interest in the organization
- Address specific requirements listed in the position description and why you meet those requirements
- Do not restate your resume
- Communicate your fit for the organization by highlighting what interests you about the mission, values, services of the organization

FINAL PARAGRAPH

- Make a request to talk with the employer
- Include your contact information and any preferences for your preferred type of contact (email, phone, etc.)
- Thank the employer for their time

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Date

Name

Title

Name of Organization

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. _____:

FIRST PARAGRAPH:

Tell why you are writing the letter (be clear about the position or type of position you are seeking). Attract the employer's interest by briefly touching on your specific knowledge of the company and/or position. Is this an inquiry or are you applying for a job? How did you find out about the position or the organization? If someone referred you, you may mention his/her name here. Give a brief statement demonstrating your specific interest in the organization/field.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S):

Your middle paragraph(s) should communicate precisely what you have to offer the employer. Why do you want to work for this organization? How has your background prepared you for this position? Select your most relevant details and skills from past experiences that relate to the position/organization at hand. Show the employer how your background matches the requirements of the job. Avoid vague statements; back up claims with specific examples. Refer to your resume. (Your middle paragraph(s) is/are critical to your success.)

CLOSING PARAGRAPH:

Closure. Restate your interest and willingness to meet the employer. Elicit a response and/or mention that you will follow up with phone call if appropriate. Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration of your application/inquiry.

Sincerely,

(4 spaces if mailed or faxed, 2 spaces if emailed)

Handwritten signature if mailing or faxing

Your typed name

Notes

- *Sell yourself and state your case concisely*
- *Follow up with the employer*
- *Cover letters should be individualized for each employer*
- *Keep a copy for yourself*
- *Double check your grammar and spelling/Have others proofread your work*
- *Cover letters are one page*

January 26, 2013

526 Harre Road, Apartment 2B
Valparaiso, IN 46383

Mr. James Smith
Director of Marketing
Eli Lilly and Company
P.O. Box 5000
Indianapolis, IN 46240

Dear Mr. Smith:

I recently spoke with Mr. Johnson at the Fall Career Fair at Valparaiso University regarding career opportunities within the healthcare industry, and he suggested that I contact you. Eli Lilly's recent market expansion and use of the most current biotechnology in its products is particularly impressive. I am very interested in the Marketing Associate position with Lilly and have enclosed my resume for your review.

As a marketing intern last summer at Pfizer, I applied and developed these skills in a corporate environment. Through interaction with clients ranging from hospitals to pharmaceutical industries, I fostered strong communication and marketing skills and the ability to work with diverse customers. Additionally, I am committed to achieving results. For example, my new approach to marketing an on-campus community service program increased student participation by 25%. Given my goal-driven nature and desire to succeed, I am confident that I can make a positive contribution to Lilly's marketing efforts.

I will call you next week to answer questions you might have about my qualifications and to see if we could schedule a time to discuss marketing and sales opportunities at Eli Lilly. Thank you for your time and I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Tom Washington

Enclosure

← Include if sending a hard (not
electronic) copy of resume and letter