

# Cover Letter Skills

From the Office of Career/Transfer Services



(252) 638-4597

[CareerServices@cravencc.edu](mailto:CareerServices@cravencc.edu)

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Cover Letter Writing Tips...

### The Purpose of the Cover Letter

- ❖ To serve as a business letter to transmit your resume to a prospective employer
- ❖ This is a good way to highlight points on your resume
- ❖ To introduce you and your background to the employer
- ❖ To serve as a sales letter, intended to convince the prospective employer that you have something valuable to contribute and that it would be worth their time to interview you
- ❖ The Cover Letter opens the door for your resume

### Organization of the Cover Letter

- ❖ **Paragraph 1:** Why you are writing? Mention contact person (who told you about the job) in the first sentence
- ❖ **Paragraph 2:** Why should they hire you? This takes the most work because you need to “hook” the reader. “As in the enclosed resume...” mention degree, specific course work, work experience, extracurricular activities, summary of resume—two or three things most central to the qualifications
- ❖ **Paragraph 3:** Why do you want to work for them? Optional
- ❖ **Paragraph 4:** The close. Be assertive – I will call you (be specific about when) for the appointment in 2-3 business days (not “interview”). Do not hesitate to call me at (your phone #). If you say you will call, then call. Telephone skills are very important so practice before you call!

### The Cover Letter Needs to be:

- ❖ Typed
- ❖ Original
- ❖ Addressed to a specific person (put every effort into finding a contact name!)
- ❖ Upbeat and confident
- ❖ Not repetitious of the resume
- ❖ Written on matching stationary
- ❖ Short and to the point
- ❖ PROOFREAD!!!

## Principles for an Effective Cover Letter

- ❖ Address the letter to the correct person with the correct title and spelling
- ❖ Use correct grammar and punctuation
- ❖ Don't use current employer's stationary because doing so suggests you may be using your employer's time to apply for the other employment
- ❖ Relate to what the employer wants
- ❖ Identify what the employer is asking for in a candidate and relate your experience, education, and background to those needs
- ❖ Be direct
- ❖ Speak to the interests of the employer, but don't make the letter too long
- ❖ Apply for the right position, by title if possible – Some employers have many positions open
- ❖ Be original when composing your letter
- ❖ Request an interview and follow up that request with a course of action to be taken by yourself within a given time (For example, "I will contact you within 3 days regarding an appointment for an interview.")
- ❖ Do not include letters of reference – those can be submitted later, if necessary
- ❖ Enclose a resume that is accurate, complete, and brief
- ❖ Make sure the contact information on your cover letter matches that of your resume

## More Cover Letter Tips

- ❖ Address someone in authority- call and ask for the name of the hiring manager
- ❖ Demonstrate that you have done your “homework”
- ❖ Convey your enthusiasm, sound positive and confident
- ❖ Balance professionalism with personal warmth and friendliness
- ❖ Identify at least one thing about you that is unique
- ❖ Be appropriate
- ❖ Outline specifically what you are asking
- ❖ Point directly to the next step
- ❖ Remain as brief and focused as possible
- ❖ Do not exceed one page
- ❖ Must be written individually for each employer
- ❖ Focus should be on your qualifications
- ❖ Be ERROR free
- ❖ Follow-up each letter with a phone call

## Types of Cover Letters

### **General Cover Letter**

- ❖ Often addressed Dear Employer
- ❖ Emphasize your qualifications in hopes that a position will be available

### **Specific Cover Letter**

- ❖ Directed at a specific company, person and position
- ❖ Personally addresses the companies needs

### **Blind Ad Response**

- ❖ Use when responding to a job posting in which employer is unidentified
- ❖ Name the position you are applying for in the first paragraph
- ❖ State our qualifications
- ❖ Be prepared not to receive a response from this method of job application

### **Follow – Up Letters**

- ❖ Always write a follow up letter or note after an interview
- ❖ If you interview with more than one person, write letters to each one
- ❖ Thank the interviewer or express your appreciation for the interview
- ❖ Remind the interviewer of the date you were there and the position you were discussing
- ❖ Reaffirm your interest in the position
- ❖ Mention the follow-up letter as a thank you note expressing your appreciation for the time and interest shown even if you are not interested in the particular position
- ❖ Write promptly – within the same/one day after the interview

## Cover Letter Power Phrases

- ❖ I am particularly well qualified for your position and would like to have the opportunity to meet with you to explore how I may be of value to your company.
- ❖ Your advertisement in the March 25<sup>th</sup> edition of The Flint Journal piqued my interest. This position has strong appeal to me.
- ❖ I am confident that with my abilities I can make an immediate and valuable contribution to your company.
- ❖ Please consider my qualifications for the position of controller, which was advertised in the November 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the Sun Journal.
- ❖ I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss my abilities in more depth, and am available for an interview at your earliest convenience.
- ❖ I am seeking an opportunity to excel in a dynamic company and am looking forward to relocating to New Bern, North Carolina.
- ❖ Please find enclosed a copy of my resume for your review. I believe the combination of my accounting education and my business expertise offer me the unique opportunity to make a positive contribution to your firm.
- ❖ Recently I saw an advertisement in the North Carolina Press for a position as a Systems Analysis. My candidacy for this position is advanced by my experience in three areas: training, support, and a technology background.
- ❖ My personal goal is simple: I wish to be a part of an organization that wants to excel in both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. I believe that if I had the opportunity to interview with you it would be apparent that my skills are far reaching.
- ❖ Please allow me to highlight some of my achievements which relate to your requirements: \_\_\_\_\_.

## Samples of Opening Sentences For Cover Letters

- ❖ I am writing to inquire about the possibility of employment in the Art Department of Pro Advertising, Inc.
- ❖ I am writing to request an informational meeting with you regarding career opportunities in the field of human services.
- ❖ It has come to my attention through your advertisement in *Job Choices: 1997* that you are considering recent graduates for entry-level positions in writing and editing.
- ❖ I am very interested in applying for an entry-level position in the field of human resources.
- ❖ I wish to be considered for the management-training program at NYNEX.
- ❖ My recent conversation with Jacqueline Penny, a computer programmer with your company, has confirmed my interest in applying for a position at New Technologies, Inc.



## Cover Letter Layout

Your Name  
Your Address  
City, State Zip code

Date

Contact person  
Title  
Organization name  
Organization address

Dear Contact person (no first names!!):

### OPENING PARAGRAPH

- ❖ Use catchy or clever opening sentences to arouse interest
- ❖ Tell why you are writing; be specific about the position you are applying for
- ❖ Give information to show your specific interest in the organization

### MIDDLE PARAGRAPH

- ❖ State your knowledge of the skills required in the position
- ❖ Expand on your background to show why you should be considered
- ❖ Refer the reader to your qualification on your resume or other materials
- ❖ Try to make as many connections between your background and the job as possible

### CLOSING PARAGRAPH

- ❖ Ask for an interview, suggesting a day or time frame when you would be available. Be sure to enclose a current and working telephone number where you can be reached at the employer's convenience.
- ❖ Indicate that you plan on following up by phone. If you say you will follow up, be sure that you do.
- ❖ Refer to any documents enclosed such as your resume, references, etc.

Sincerely Yours,

(Your Signature)

Your name typed

Enclosure

<http://www.hartwick.edu/tcpd/resource/cover/>

Cover Letter Sample

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Razor Shark  
3301 College Avenue Apt. 1A  
Davie, FL 33314

May 17, 2012

Ms. Barbara Moore  
Human Resources Director  
Metropolitan Hospital  
Winston-Salem, NC

Dear Ms. Moore:

Please consider this letter of application and resume for the position of Radiologic Technologist you advertised in Sunday's Sun Journal.

I am graduating from Craven Community College on May 9, 2012 and will be available for full-time employment immediately. As my resume indicates, I have completed my Associate in Applied Science Degree in Radiologic Technology and have many hours of clinical experience. I feel that my education, experience and skills qualify me for the position you advertised.

I am highly motivated, stimulated by responsibility, and willing to take initiative in situations. I am confident in my abilities to perform as a Radiologic Technologist, and look forward to speaking with you further about this position. I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications and your position.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Razor Sharp

Enclosure

## Thank You Letter Sample

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Razor Shark  
3301 College Avenue Apt. 1A  
Davie, FL 33314

May 17, 2012

Ms. Barbara Moore  
Human Resources Director  
Metropolitan Hospital  
Winston-Salem, NC

Dear Ms. Moore:

Thank you for taking the time to discuss the Radiologic Technologist position at Metropolitan Hospital with me. After meeting with you and observing the company's operations, I am further convinced that my background and skills coincide well with your needs.

I really appreciate that you took so much time to acquaint me with the company. It is not wonder that Metropolitan Hospital retains its employees for so long. I feel I could learn a great deal from you and would certainly enjoy working with you.

In addition to my qualifications and experience, I will bring excellent work habits and judgment to this position. With the countless demands on your time, I am sure that you require people who can be trusted to carry out their responsibilities with minimal supervision.

I look forward, Ms. Moore, to hearing from you concerning your hiring decision. Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Razor Sharp