

Cover Letter Guide



Office of Career Services

Westfield State College

(413) 572-5206

www.wsc.ma.edu/careerservices

careers@wsc.ma.edu

WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

Whenever you apply for a job, you will need both a resume and a cover letter. The cover letter serves as your introduction to the employer. It expresses your interest in being considered for a position and provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate how your skills and qualifications match those necessary to perform the job. An effective cover letter makes you stand out and makes the reader want to look at your resume.

BASIC RULES FOR THE COVER LETTER

- **Address the letter to a specific person.** If you do not have a name, call the organization and ask for the name and title of the person who should receive your letter.
- **Limit the letter to one page.** Keep it simple and to the point. NOTE: Spelling and grammar must be perfect. Have someone who is knowledgeable review your letter and provide feedback.
- **Do not simply restate what is on your resume.** Instead provide examples of how your skills and background directly match the requirements of the position.
- **Research the organization carefully.** Demonstrate in your cover letter that you appreciate and understand the organization's principal activities.
- **Think about the skills necessary to do the job for which you are applying.** Highlight experiences and skills that match what the employer is looking for. They will almost always provide you with a detailed job description which identifies the necessary qualifications and main responsibilities.
- **Avoid starting sentences with "I".**
- **Make each cover letter unique to each employer.** What do you know about their company and how do your skills and qualifications match the specific needs of the position?
- **Be confident about your skills and what you can offer an organization.** If you don't believe in yourself that insecurity will show.
- **Follow through.** In the concluding paragraph, tell the reader what your next course of action will be (ex.: you will follow up with a phone call within one week). By mentioning that you will call, shows that you are serious about the position and forces you to follow through.
- **Express what you can offer to the company, not what the company will offer you if you are hired.**

WHY SEND A THANK YOU LETTER?

A thank-you letter is an essential follow-up step to an interview. It is your chance to present yourself again and to answer or address specific concerns raised during the interview about whether or not you have the qualifications the organization is seeking. For example, if an interviewer had doubts about your supervisory experience, you can emphasize that you have, indeed, demonstrated leadership abilities in much of your volunteer work. You may also use your letter to mention a specific area of related expertise that you did not have an opportunity to discuss in the interview. The thank you letter is a courtesy that is expected and noticed by interviewers. You may fax or e-mail your letter if you know that the hiring time line is drawing to a close.

Career Services Library Resources for Cover and Thank-You Letter Writing

If you would like more information on cover and thank-you letter writing, visit the Career Services Resource Library. You will find helpful books that provide sample letters as well as great advice on how to write cover and thank-you letters.

THE FORMAT OF A COVER LETTER

Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code
Your Phone Number
E-mail (optional)

Date
(2 lines)

Contact Person's Name
Title
Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code
(1 line)

Dear (Ms. or Mr.) Last Name: (Use Title if name is not available)
(1 line)

Paragraph 1: State why you are writing and why you are interested in working for that employer. Identify the position that you would like to be considered for and how you learned of the opportunity. If you are writing at the suggestion of someone who knows the addressee, this is a good place to say so.

Paragraph 2: Briefly state the specific work that interests you and detail the relevant qualifications you offer. Spell out exactly how your experiences, skills, and education fit the position and can benefit the company.

Paragraph 3: Close the letter by thanking the reader for the attention or consideration given you and stating the next course of action. Indicate that you will follow up and then do it! Refer the reader to any documents you have enclosed (resume, references, writing samples, etc.). Provide the employer with your phone number so that they can reach you.
(1 line)

Sincerely,

(3 lines) - *Your Signature*

Type Your Name

Enclosure(s)

Sample Cover Letter (Applying for an Internship)

Courtney Hall # 516
577 Western Avenue
Westfield, MA 01086-1630(413) 572-0000
Tbell1234@wsc.ma.edu

April 12, 2009

Mr. Charles Beckett
Editorial Director
Springfield Daily Press
322 State Street
Springfield, MA 01030

Dear Mr. Beckett:

I recently noticed a posting for a Springfield Daily Press summer internship, which entails writing short articles and assisting with research and the editorial process. As a student at Westfield State College majoring in English, I am focusing on writing and the media and would like the opportunity to demonstrate my strong communication and editorial skills with your organization.

Through course work in both communication and literature, I have developed skills in written, oral, and multimedia expression - all critical to working in journalism. As the editor for our student newspaper and as a teaching assistant evaluating students' written work, I have strengthened my editorial skills. The course, "Writing for Mass Media", gave me a firm grounding in the basic techniques of news writing. In addition, my varied work experiences, ranging from program coordination to waiting tables, have helped me become proficient in dealing with the public and working under pressure.

Enclosed are my resume and writing samples for your review. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (413) 572-0000, or by e-mail at tbell1234@wsc.ma.edu. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Thomas Bell

Thomas Bell

Enclosure

Sample Cover Letter (Applying for an Entry-Level Position)

329 Mechanic Street
Westfield, MA 01085
(413) 562-8888
cjackson@hotmail.com

March 23, 2009

Mr. Jonathan Medina
Human Resources Director
Walden Communications
Brockton, MA 02356

Dear Mr. Medina:

Please consider me an applicant for the position of marketing assistant on your staff. I learned of this vacancy from the Office of Career Services at Westfield State College, where I will earn my Bachelor of Science in May of this year with a dual major in Business Management and Computer Information Systems.

As the enclosed resume indicates, I have had several business-related internships in the areas of marketing, sales, and finance through which I have gained a great deal of knowledge about your industry. My main career interest lies in the marketing aspect of the industry and particularly in helping your company expand its client base. My computer skills are top notch as a result of designing and maintaining a web site for the business club on campus. I am confident that through these skills I can make an immediate contribution to your team.

As your vacancy notice instructs, I have arranged to have references and a copy of my transcripts forwarded to you. I would be very interested in discussing this opportunity with you further. I will call you in a few days to see if we can arrange a mutually convenient time to meet. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at (413) 562-8888 or email cjackson@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

Christina Jackson

Christina M. Jackson

Enclosure

Sample Cover Letter (Response to an Advertisement)

453 College Street
Westfield, MA 01085
(413) 562-9999
croberts@yahoo.com

April 2, 2009

Ms. Brenda Waters
Northeast Outfitters Incorporated
Industrial Park
Mansfield, MA 02048

Dear Ms. Waters:

This is written in response to your March 31 advertisement in the Boston Herald for regional managers at Northeast Outfitters Incorporated. I am interested in a career in management and am certain that I could be an asset to the management team at Northeast Outfitters Incorporated.

My qualifications for this position include:

- Strong customer service orientation – provided information and assistance to students and faculty. Managed own service business with varied customer base.
- Knowledge of management theories – will receive B.S. with a major in Business Management in May 2009.
- Familiarity with Northeast Outfitters products – have shopped at the original Northeast Outfitters outlet store since it's opening in 2001.
- Solid supervisory experience – enthusiastic participant in several sports including tennis, swimming, football, golf, and basketball.

A management career with Northeast Outfitters Incorporated would enable me to utilize my management training in a familiar retailing environment. Relocation would not pose any difficulty for me. My resume is enclosed for your review. I would like to pursue this career opportunity with Northeast Outfitters. On April 12, I will contact your office to arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,

Christopher Roberts

Christopher Roberts

Sample Cover Letter (Referral)

908 Beverly Road
Longmeadow, MA 03029
(413) 739-1111
wilson@lycos.com

March 30, 2009

Ms. Nancy Sullivan
Director, Academic Affairs
University of Albany
Williams Administration Building
Albany, NY 20832

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

I am writing to express my interest in the Academic Advising position for the 2009-2010 academic year. I learned of this work opportunity through Dr. Judy Van Westfield in the Psychology Department at Westfield State College. Upon learning of your work opportunity, I am fascinated by the prospect.

I was drawn to the field of Athletic Counseling based on my 10 years of competitive running and my strong desire to help others. My commitment to make a difference was sparked by my personal growth as a motivated student-athlete. I believe athletes are unique college students who, with proper guidance and sufficient resources, are capable of attaining their full potential as both athletes and students. As an undergraduate student my years have proven to be challenging, yet extremely rewarding. By ambitiously involving myself in fieldwork on campus and by entering the ranks of coaching, I have gained invaluable hands-on experience. Furthermore, I am confident in my abilities to work collaboratively as a dependable member of your team.

The enclosed resume further elaborates my accomplishments, background, and relevant experience. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss further my qualifications. Please feel free to contact me at (413) 739-1111. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Kimberly E. Wilson

Kimberly E. Wilson

Enclosure

Sample Cover Letter (General, Broadcast Letter)

123 College Street
Stafford Springs, CT 03458
(203) 674-2111
ndaigle1@yahoo.com

April 25, 2009

Mr. Robert Iron
Vice President, Finance
Reebok International
321 Fifteenth Street
New York, NY 10098

Dear Mr. Iron:

I am interested in joining Reebok International as a financial analyst. My interest in this area has developed in the course of my professional experiences as well as my undergraduate business study.

Some of the qualifications I can offer your company are:

- A solid knowledge of finance gained while earning a double major in Finance/Economics.
- Two years experience analyzing data and written reports for a commercial concern.
- Excellent communication skills, both written and oral. I write a monthly column for our school newspaper and have given numerous presentations to the Junior Chamber of Commerce.

I am greatly interested in working for a company praised by USA Today as a “shining light in corporate world of athletic shoes and apparel.” I strongly believe that my skills and qualifications will prove beneficial to your company.

My resume is enclosed. On May 1, I will contact your office to see if a meeting can be arranged at your convenience. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Nancy Daigle

Nancy Daigle

Enclosure

Sample Thank-You Note

873 Russellville Road
Charlestown, MA 08795
(617) 798-3478
ray@wsc.ma.edu

May 8, 2009

Mr. Thomas A. Jones
Marketing Analysis Services Manager
MassMutual Companies
322 State Street
Springfield, MA 01987

Dear Mr. Jones:

Thank you for meeting with me last Friday. I found our discussion to be very informative and am excited about the possibility of joining your staff as a marketing associate.

As I mentioned in the interview, I can offer many skills and insights that are essential to the marketing efforts of the MassMutual Companies. In particular, I have played an integral role in the marketing of several newsletters and other publications, including the coordination of direct mailings and the compilation of specialized marketing lists.

You described this position as being mid-level management. As a marketing associate with Textiles Publishing, I have been responsible for numerous group projects that require overseeing the cooperation of several divisions within the company. In addition, I have a solid record of meeting deadlines and have developed a keen appreciation of bottom-line issues.

I am confident I can make a valuable contribution to MassMutual. I am impressed by the long-term possibilities with your organization and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Raymond C. Rivera

Raymond C. Rivera

Sample Thank-You Note

321 Hightower Street
Haverhill, MA 10984
(978) 574-0999
evelynr@yahoo.com

May 1, 2008

Mr. Phillip Morales
Chief Operating Officer/Controller
CBC Corporation
1 Industry Plaza
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Mr. Morales:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the EDP Audit position currently available at the CBC Corporation. The position sounds very challenging and rewarding with ample room for growth. I feel my background and qualifications prepare me well for the EDP Audit position we discussed.

One of my strengths is the ability to lead an audit team and ensure that strict deadlines are met. As a Junior Auditor at Sanderson Corporation, under my supervision and direction the audit team increased company profits by 25% percent.

I have a great willingness and eagerness to learn more about the EDP auditing and feel that I am the type of individual that would blend in well with the EDP audit staff at the CBC Corporation. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Roberts

Evelyn Roberts