**What is a Cover Letter?**

Cover letters allow the applicant the opportunity to tailor the information in the resume to the specific needs of the employer or the position being applied to. It is recommended that you always include a cover letter when mailing or e-mailing your resume. A well-written, informative cover letter has been known to secure an interview.

**Is a Cover Letter really necessary?**

You should always include a cover letter when you are mailing, faxing or e-mailing your resume. It provides the employer with a writing sample, shows them that you took the time and that you are really interested in the organization or opportunity. A well written letter can be the edge over your competition.

**What are the two types of cover letters?**

A letter of application is written in response to an ad or job vacancy notice. You need to relate relevant facts about yourself to the prospective employer as well as your reasons for applying for the job or internship. A letter of inquiry is used to ask about general position or internship openings within an organization and to request an interview. You must direct your letter to the needs of the organization and show how you fit in.

**What should the cover letter look like?**

- **First Paragraph:** Indicates why you are writing and where you heard about the opening. Talk about why you are interested in the specific position or the organization. If you were referred by someone, give their name. Summarize in one sentence why you are the right candidate. Your job in the 1st paragraph is to get them interested in reading the rest, you need to catch their attention early.
- **Second Paragraph:** Expand on your experience, interests and qualifications as they match the needs of the organization. Highlight or summarize important features from your resume. Do not repeat material from your resume word for word. Focus on those experiences that are most relevant to the job. Use the job description to help you tailor what you highlight.
- **Third Paragraph:** Convey your interest in the organization and in the particular position or area. Summarize how the organization would benefit from your employment and why you should be interviewed. You can reinforce your knowledge of the industry and organization.
- **Fourth Paragraph:** Closing: Express your interest in meeting to discuss opportunities or to explore potential openings. Indicate that you will be calling him/her within a specific time to arrange a mutually convenient appointment (where possible). Make sure that the closing is not vague. Thank the person for their time and consideration.

**What things should I do and NOT do when formatting my cover letter?**

- When printing use standard bond paper that matches your resume. Copies should be of excellent quality, neat and clean
- Use 11 or 12 point font for the text and fonts such as Arial or Times New Roman
- Margins should be between .75 and 1.25 inches
- Avoid graphics or shading
- Formatting should be consistent and text lined up
- It should be only 1 page
- Never hand-write a cover letter
What things should I do and NOT do regarding the content of the cover letter?

• Make it specific to the position and employer.
• Tell them why you are interested in the position and their company. Show them that you have done your research.
• Do not repeat your entire resume, highlight some of the key qualities that are relevant to the position.
• Address the letter to an individual where possible.
• Make sure there are no spelling errors, typos, mistakes.
• All printed/faxed cover letters should be signed.
• Keep a copy of the letter for your records.
• Project enthusiasm, determination, professionalism, and self-confidence through your cover letter.
• Don’t over use the word I

Tips for cover letters

• Read your cover letter out loud – do you sound impressive?
• Have several other people review the letter
• Tailor your cover letter to the position you are applying to. Use the job description or employer’s website to give you clues on keywords you can use. Have different versions of your cover letter for the different types of jobs. A cover letter for an accountant and bank teller position will be different because they require different skills.
• Research the company.
• Remember recruiters get hundreds and thousands of applications therefore it is your job to capture their attention in the 1st paragraph.
• Review sample cover letters
• Try to use the words of the position/industry.

Where do I go for more help with my cover letter?

• Our website www.career.brooklyn.cuny.edu contains links to useful websites including where to do company research. You should also visit the following career websites for additional advice and samples of cover letters: http://www.careers.wsj.com/, www.collegejournal.com, www.monster.com, www.collegegrad.com and www.rileyguide.org
• The Learning Center at Brooklyn College can assist you with your overall writing skills.
• Once you have your cover letter and have followed the advice provided in the workshop and in this quick reference bring your cover letter to be reviewed by a career counselor during drop in hours.
  Monday: 11:00 – 1:00  Tuesday: 2:30 – 4:30 and 5:00 - 6:30
  Wednesday: 11:00 – 1:00 and 5:00 - 6:30  Thursday: 2:30 - 4:30
  Friday: 10:00 – 3:30*

  *Friday drop in hours are sponsored by Target. Meet with a Target recruiter to get resume, cover letter, and interview advice as well as ask questions about their internships and full time managerial jobs

COVERLETTER CHECKLIST

Review your cover letter and check for the following

_____ Does your cover letter sound impressive (read it out loud)? Would you interview yourself for the position?
_____ Did you make sure there are NO typos, grammar or spelling mistakes?
_____ Is the font size at least 11 point and margins at least .75 inches
_____ Is your cover letter 1 page?
_____ Is the formatting you used (font type, font size etc) consistent?
_____ Is the text lined up?
_____ Is the cover letter customized to the position you are applying to? Did you make it specific to the company? *Recruiters know when you use the same letter for different companies*
_____ Are your relevant skills highlighted? Did you use the job description for ideas of what skills they are seeking?
_____ Is your cover letter visually appealing and easy to read? *(Remember recruiters look at cover letters for...*)
maybe 5-10 seconds at first, they will not bother reading it if it looks confusing.)

_____ Is there a space between each paragraph?
_____ Did you have at least one other person review your cover letter?
_____ Can you explain everything in your cover letter? Did you use words that you know?
_____ Did you sign the letter? (if you are printing/faxing it)
_____ Did you address the letter to someone (if possible) instead of Dear Sir or To Whom it May Concern?
_____ Did you explain why you are interested in the position/organization? Did you show that you know something about the company?
_____ Did you thank the individual for their time and consideration?
_____ Is it clear what position you are applying for?
_____ Does your letter project energy, enthusiasm and confidence?
_____ When you made statements such as “I am the ideal candidate” or “I am very interested”, did you give some examples as to why you are the ideal candidate or explain why you are interested?

SAMPLE E-MAIL COVER LETTER

When e-mailing your resume you do not need to include your address or the address of the recipient. For a formal letter it should be included (see sample cover letter below)

I am writing in response to your available internship opportunities in the Learning and Development, and Talent and Artist Relations area at ____ Networks. When I learned that the internship program at my school had available ____ Network internship positions, I immediately signed up for the program. Ever since I was a kid, I have always dreamed of working at ____ Networks, and I am willing to do whatever it takes to make my dreams come true. ____ would be the perfect place for me to express myself, and showcase my love for music, as well as my burning desire to learn.

I am a junior at Brooklyn College, majoring in Television and Radio. Having over four years of sales experience I have developed great communication and interpersonal skills. As part of a music group, I have been performing all over New York City and have developed a pretty large fan base. I can understand some of the struggles and ups and downs that music artists go through on a day-to-day basis. Given my work experience, work ethic and educational background I can make a strong contribution to ____.

I believe music is what keeps people sane and makes the world go ‘round. I have done my research and ____ is hands down the leader as far as music television is concerned. ____’s influence is felt all over the world. I am looking to pursue a career in the entertainment industry and I strongly feel that ____ would be the best place to prepare me for my future career goals.

This is a very exciting opportunity. I have always lived by the motto, “I’m going to be the best at what I do, or I’m going to die trying,” and with that motto I would be a great asset to ____ Networks. I have included my resume for your review. Given the opportunity to interview with you, I believe you will see that I would be a great intern. I can be reached at Cell- ph# or <your e-mail>

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Ms. Jane Doe  
Partner-In-Charge  
Big Public Accounting, Inc.  
123 N. Michigan Ave.  
Chicago, IL 12345

Dear Ms. Doe:

One of the career counselors at Brooklyn College informed me that ______ is seeking an accounting student to fill the Survey Associate position and I feel confident that I exceed the qualifications you are seeking. In addition to the qualifications you require, I also offer a strong academic achievement and several years of work experience. It would be a great opportunity to become a part of the oldest and one of the most respected financial leaders of the world.

Recently, I completed a summer internship in the accounting department of ____). There, I was introduced to the essentials of accounting and taxation. Through dedication and hard work I, along with three other students, managed to complete a year’s worth of accounting related work, in less than two months, to meet the June 15th tax deadline. In addition, I successfully completed the company’s related tax forms under a stringent time limit due to the tax deadline. Due to my success in the accounting department, I was the only student chosen by the executive producer to apply my broad areas of expertise to the productions department as well, which concentrated in the marketing, business, and the productions area. I was given the responsibility to seek potential clients, in the ______ realm, who would be interested in educational products and videos. I believe that I can be an asset to the _______ in a very short time as I was for the ________.

Participating in the team of ______ and sharing the same realm that Alexander Hamilton once did would be a satisfaction of its own. The basis that contributes to the overall triumph of this company is the success of its client relationships. The ______ worldwide locations show the further accomplishment of this financial giant. Hence, I would like to acquire a chance to offer my expertise and knowledge to the _____, to partake in its history and outstanding success for the future.

My learning skills are excellent, I am very conscientious about meeting deadlines and completing tasks unsupervised. My varied work experience has exposed me to working with customers which has strengthened my ability to work and communicate well with a diverse population of individuals. These skills, combined with my education and work experience, make me a superior candidate for this position. I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible to arrange time for an interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,