



Career Services

804-524-5211

Johnston Memorial Library, ACE, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

[careerservices@vsu.edu](mailto:careerservices@vsu.edu)

[www.vsu.edu/career-services/](http://www.vsu.edu/career-services/)

## What should I include on a Cover Letter or Letter of Introduction?

A cover letter is a document that introduces you to the employer. The letter allows you to convey your passion and interests in the position and organization. In addition, it allows the recruiter to assess your written communication skills.

It can be difficult to discuss how your unique background can be of value to the employer and the letter gives you a chance to connect your skills and experiences to the role, as well as communicate how you can make an impact to the organization.

**Before you begin writing your cover letter, it's important to evaluate the job description and circle or highlight skills and attributes you possess that the organization is looking for in a candidate. For example, are they looking for someone who can manage a budget, build relationships or has the ability to coordinate events? If you possess these skills and attributes, circle it! Next, connect the qualifications you circled to an experience from your classes, internship, part-time job, or volunteer experience.**

Below is a breakdown on how to draft your cover letter:

### **Introduction**

Most cover letters begin with this sentence: "I am writing to express my interest in a full-time position..." Imagine if you are a recruiter and read 50+ cover letters that begin with the same sentence? It can become very tedious! I recommend beginning your cover letter with an attention grabbing sentence to set you apart from the competition. This sentence can describe the skills you can offer the organization or an accomplishment you wish to highlight. For example: "With experience managing a budget of \$20,000, ability to build relationships with stakeholders, and event management coordination, I would like to apply to ..."

This sentence is eye-catching and entices the recruiter to want to read more. Using these simple points as guidelines and the cover letter samples provided above as a starting point, create your own unique and captivating opening line that draws the reader in and keeps them interested.

Instead of, "To Whom It May Concern" put our actual names. If you cannot ascertain an actual name, write Dear Human Resources Director or Dear Internship Coordinator.

### **Entice them with the job title and some of your standout accomplishments...**

1. As an IT Director for ABC Company, I manage IT operations for a 500+ employee organization. Since I was recruited in 2005, my goal has been to modernize and scale the technology landscape and drive forward initiatives to expand the capabilities, systems, and performance across the organization. To date, the results have been impressive, including transition to a new Storage Area Network (SAN), Microsoft desktop environment, data warehouse, and Internet technology tools. Further, I have captured more than \$2.5 million in development and operating cost reductions.
2. I am a veteran Construction Manager with extensive experience in the designing, planning, budgeting, staffing, and on-site supervision of new construction and renovation projects. With 15+ years in construction and project management, I bring to ABC Company value-added expertise in:
3. As an accomplished Chief Financial Officer (CFO), I possess broad cross-functional experience in emerging, high-growth, and well-established corporations. Unlike other finance executives, my focus has not been limited to just finance but includes strategic planning, change management, system implementations, and business operations, as well as the performance improvement of teams. Highlights of my career include:



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4. Highlight the fact you can meet their needs to keep them reading.
5. Cultivating relationships to deliver exceptional results is what I do best. Whether in a start-up situation or a high-growth organization, I have consistently increased sales and customer satisfaction through my ability to develop first-class sales solutions and drive professional excellence. Highlights of my career that may be of interest to you include: Cross-cultural communication, multi-departmental collaboration, and producing highly detailed and dependable administrative and marketing support are what I do best.

### **Let's illustrate. Which of these, drawn from actual examples, would you rather read?**

*I am applying for the position of NPR Fall Intern. I believe that my strong interest in education topics and background in research qualify me for this internship. My undergraduate and postgraduate academic careers have taught me to critically analyze and synthesize large amounts of data quickly. I also have experience conducting research in corporate and office settings.*

### **Or this:**

*The first time I ever went on live television, I was in Lahore, Pakistan. By the time I ended up in Pakistan this past January, being on camera was not new to me. I had several years of on-camera experience under my belt traveling around the world with an educational travel show for kids. When I lived in Los Angeles, I spent my hard-earned bartending money on TV hosting classes for a year.*

### **Body**

The body is truly the meat and potatoes of your cover letter. In this paragraph, you will describe a situation or example of how you utilized the skills you introduced in the first paragraph. For example, if you highlighted your ability to build relationships, this is your chance to describe how you built and maintained relationships with stakeholders in your previous experience(s). I recommend sharing 2-3 stories in your body and keeping them concise. Being able to illustrate how you have demonstrated these skills is imperative and provides evidence that you possess these attributes.

Also, it's important to demonstrate fit with the organization and describe why you are interested in them. This will help your cover letter stand out and effectively tailor the document to the company. For example, does the organization have a strong Corporate Social Responsibility mission that you identify with? Then, in a few sentences, describe how your values connect with the company's.

### **Conclusion**

After you thank the employer for their time, it's important to end your letter with a strong finish and ask for an interview. Here are sample endings to use for your conclusion.

### **Ask for It**

You know that old saying, 'Ask and you shall receive'? It's true. It may sound like such common sense and obvious advice, but how many times have you sent a cover letter with your resume and not asked for the interview? It's easy to do!

**In the closing paragraph of your cover letter, all you need to do is ask the employer for the interview.** I've read statistics that have indicated job seekers who ASK for the interview in their cover letters are twice as likely to GET the interview. Below, I'll give you several examples that you can modify and use in your own cover letter.



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### Ending #1

I am excited about the Director of Sales position with XYZ Widgets and would love the opportunity to meet in person to further discuss my experience and the value I can offer you as your next Director of Sales. Please call me at 555.555.5555 or email [abc@students.vsu.edu](mailto:abc@students.vsu.edu) to schedule an interview at your earliest convenience.

### Ending #2

I would like a personal interview at your earliest convenience to further discuss my credentials with you. I can be reached at 555.555.5555 or via email at [ldg@students.vsu.edu](mailto:ldg@students.vsu.edu) and will follow up as well to Make sure you have received my information.

### Ending #3

Thank you for your time reviewing my resume. I welcome the opportunity to discuss in a personal interview my qualifications and fit for the position. Feel free to reach me at 555.555.5555 or via email [ldg@gmail.com](mailto:ldg@gmail.com) at your earliest convenience.

### Ending #4

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will follow up in one week to schedule a day and time we can meet to further discuss the position and my experience. You may also reach me at 555.555.5555 or email [ldg@students.vsu.edu](mailto:ldg@students.vsu.edu) to schedule an interview.

As you begin writing your letter, be enthusiastic and demonstrate how you can make an impact to the organization. Once you create a rough draft, I encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor

### Have someone else read your letter

We call this editing. Spellcheck is great, but take the next step: Have someone review your letter to check for misspellings. They can find punctuation mistakes or long, clunky sentences. If you can't find someone, read your letter out loud. Good luck!

Source: Campus Career Coach

[www.http://thecampuscareercoach.com/ask-the-coach/currently-working-letter-introductioncover-letter-template-need-guidance-include#.WcPpQ4WcFPa](http://thecampuscareercoach.com/ask-the-coach/currently-working-letter-introductioncover-letter-template-need-guidance-include#.WcPpQ4WcFPa)