

# COVER LETTERS, THANK YOU LETTERS, ETC....

## Why and When Do You Need A Cover Letter?

The purpose of a cover letter is to persuade an employer to review your resume/application and consider granting you an interview. *Every time you make contact with a potential employer—whether it is a company, an organization, or a school system--you should include a cover letter.* Whether you are following up on a phone conversation, writing to inquire about employment opportunities or responding to a job announcement that states "send resume" you must include a carefully written letter. Your cover letter should *highlight* your strongest qualifications, not simply restate information from your resume.

## *What Should It Look Like? What Should It Say?*

- Keep your letter to one page; three or five paragraphs are the ideal length.
- Letters should always be addressed to a specific person whenever possible--this may require research or phone calls.
- Personalize each letter to reflect how your skills and experience match the skills and experience the employer is seeking.
- Refer to the source where you found the job announcement (i.e. the name of the newspaper, the web address, etc.) as well as name of position to be filled.
- Your cover letter should be professional in appearance.
- Use quality paper and envelopes, preferably the same as your resume.

## *Parts of a Cover Letter*

**The addressee:** Always address your letter to the hiring manager. If you do not have a contact name, call the organization to find out the name and title of the person who is doing the hiring (be sure to get the correct spelling of the name). If you are not able to find out the contact person, use "Director of Personnel."

**Salutation:** The salutation should begin with "Dear Mr." or "Dear Ms." Also, you should never use a first name in the salutation. Avoid salutations like "Dear Gentlemen," "To Whom It May Concern," and "Dear Sir."

**First paragraph:** State your purpose for writing the letter and include the name of the position you are applying for and what makes you the best candidate for this position (ex: I am submitting my resume for consideration for the position of Research Assistant at

Cambridge Associates. I am confident that my academic background in Sociology, work experience and language skills qualify me for this position). If you are responding to a

classified ad, be sure to mention the publication and the date the ad appeared. Keep the first paragraph short and powerful.

**Second paragraph:** Provide details on how you gained your skills and experience and how they match the qualifications of the position you are applying for (ex: My academic background in Anthropology and independent study have prepared me with solid research and writing skills which I believe will be an asset to your team.)

**Third paragraph:** Mention your interest and knowledge in the organization and in the industry in which you are applying (ex: I would welcome the opportunity to work at ABC Environmental Group and to be part of a team committed to reducing toxic waste.)

**Closing paragraph:** Close your letter with a plan of action. Tell your potential employer what you are going to do (ex: I will call you next week to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet.)

*(See attached samples of effective cover letters.)*

### **Thank You Letter**

Thank you letters should be sent as soon as possible after the interview to all the people you met with during your interview. The letter should acknowledge any special efforts such as lunch or office tours, as well as confirm your interest in the position. If necessary, it is also appropriate to mention relevant information you forgot to relate in the interview.

*(See attached sample of a thank you letter.)*

### **Letter Of Acceptance Of Job Offer**

The letter of acceptance is used to confirm phone conversation and/or letter offering position. The letter should include employment information discussed verbally such as salary and starting date.

*(See attached sample of an acceptance letter.)*

### **Letter Declining Job Offer**

It is important to send a letter declining a job offer in order to maintain good personal relations with employers in case you decide to reconsider employment with this organization at a later date.

*(See attached sample of letter declining job offer.)*

### **Sign Your Letters**

Always sign your letters in the space between the complimentary closing and your typed name!

**Sample Cover Letter -- Letter of Inquiry**

Longwood University  
Box 828  
Farmville, VA 23905  
September 30, 2002

Mr. Michael C. White  
Director of Human Resources  
Reynolds Metals, Inc.  
P. O. Box 131  
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Mr. White:

I will be graduating this May from Longwood University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics. I am interested in pursuing a position with a large and successful company, such as Reynolds Metals, that seeks innovative, analytical solutions to a variety of problems where applied physics is necessary. After exhaustive research, I discovered your company and the interesting work you do. I am excited about pursuing career opportunities, with emphasis on theoretical physics or applied/engineering physics, with your Research and/or Product Development branches. I would be perfectly willing to relocate to your headquarters or any one of your branches.

Enclosed is a copy of my resume highlighting my intensive research experience. In theoretical physics, my academic training in Classical and Quantum Mechanics, Electricity and Magnetism, electronics, continuum Mechanics, and theoretical Particle Physics has given me the ability to analyze and calculate complex problems more quantitatively. In experimental physics, my knowledge of theoretical physics was tested on the design, maintenance, and assembly of delicate detector equipment. Throughout my research and work experience, I have worked with a team to achieve a common goal and, as a result, have developed excellent interpersonal skills, precision in performance, and great attention to detail.

I would like to discuss my future with Reynolds Metals. I am available for an interview at your convenience, and can be reached at 434-395-2242 until May 15. After that date, I can be reached at 804-673-0987. I look forward to hearing from you and will follow up this letter with a call in approximately one to two weeks. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Elizabeth Watkins

Enclosure

## **Sample Cover Letter -- Networking**

Longwood University  
Box 828  
Farmville, VA 23909  
November 1, 2002

Mr. Thomas Elliott  
Director of Recruiting  
Accenture  
11951 Freedom Drive  
Reston, Virginia 20190

Dear Mr. Elliott:

I am a junior at Longwood University with a major in economics. I am looking for an internship position with Accenture to correspond with my interests and educational background and to gain experience in this field. Robert Dame gave me your name and suggested that I contact you about available opportunities.

For almost two years, I have worked for Britches Great Outdoors. I began as a cashier and was promoted to sales associate. This past summer, I worked full time in a high-volume store, and I consistently achieved top sales in the store, the division and the company. Presently, I am working 10-15 hours per week at Belk Department Store in Farmville, while attending classes full time. These experiences have provided me with the opportunity to develop strong interpersonal and communication skills, as well as time-management skills.

I also can offer strong research, analytical and computer skills. For the second half of my winter break, I have been given the opportunity to extern with EDI Partners, Inc., a consulting firm in Richmond, Virginia. My responsibilities will include developing home pages for the Internet and building the links to the World Wide Web. This experience will enable me to work with highly advanced software and to build my research skills.

My experiences in the classroom have given me the opportunity to cultivate many skills. My marketing classes have focused on developing strong presentation skills. There is also a great deal of emphasis placed on group dynamics. I have had several opportunities to work on projects in groups, and I have been able to make professional presentations.

Enclosed you will find my resume, outlining my skills and experience in more detail. I will be in the Northern Virginia area from December 23 through December 30. I realize this is a very busy time of year, but I would like to meet with you to discuss internship opportunities. I will be contacting your office within the next two weeks to see if this is convenient for you. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Janet Evans

Enclosure

**Sample Cover Letter -- Response to a Classified Advertisement**

Longwood University  
Box 1111  
Farmville, VA 23909  
October 23, 2002

Ms. Patricia Carmines  
Vice-President  
WHRO Public Television  
1140 Main Street  
Boston, MA 24583

Dear Ms. Carmines:

Please accept the enclosed resume as an expression of my interest in contributing relevant experience to the position of Sales Representative, as advertised in the *Boston Globe* on Sunday, October 18. I will graduate from Longwood in December and will be available as of the first of January.

I have accumulated several years of experience in the development of sales and marketing strategies. I have been involved in a number of diverse employment situations, including a self-owned business, in which I successfully utilized various sales techniques, including cold calling, telemarketing, and prospecting. In my first two years at FloSoft, I increased our client base by 25 percent. While at the Brian Agency, I was part of a sales team that generated a record-breaking \$10 million in one year. In addition, I have held numerous positions where I supervised and developed personnel and assisted in the facilitation of daily operations.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss ways in which my capabilities could be directed to meet your needs. I will call you next Monday to arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Anna Katherine Williams

Enclosure

**Sample Thank You Letter**

Longwood University  
Box 650  
Farmville, VA 23909

February 23, 2002

Mr. Patrick Cummings  
Editor  
*PC Publication*  
1140 Main Street  
Nashua, OH 03061

Dear Mr. Cummings:

I want to thank you for interviewing me yesterday for the Assistant Editor position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your organization.

My enthusiasm for the position and my interest in working for *PC Publication* were strengthened as a result of our meeting. I am confident that my education and experience in writing and editing fit nicely with the job requirements, and I am sure I could make a significant contribution to the company over time.

I would like to reiterate my strong interest in the position and in working with you. This is the ideal opportunity I seek. Please feel free to call me at 434-395-3272 if I can provide you with any additional information.

Again, thank you for the interview and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tamara Anne Joyner

**Sample Acceptance Letter**

Longwood University  
Box 999  
Farmville, VA 23909

April 24, 2002

Ms. Hannah L. Holt  
Director of Personnel  
IBT Corporation  
123 Bells Road  
Norfolk, VA 23237

Dear Ms. Holt:

Per our telephone conversation of April 20, 2002, I would like to confirm my acceptance of your employment offer. The position of Research Assistant provides exactly the kind of experience I had hoped to find. I feel confident that I can make a significant contribution to IBT Corporation, and I am grateful for the opportunity you have given me.

As we discussed, I will report to work on Monday, July 5, 2003. Again, thank you for your offer. I will keep in touch as my start date nears.

Sincerely,

Derrick Hendricks

**Sample Letter Declining Job Offer**

Longwood University  
Box 155  
Farmville, VA 23905

March 25, 2003

Dr. Amy Prince  
Senior Research Manager  
AlliedSignal  
P. O. Box 2030  
Hopewell, VA 23404

Dear Dr. Little:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on Friday to discuss the opportunities for employment within your research and development department. While I appreciate your generous offer, I have decided to decline the position. I have accepted a position elsewhere which I feel is better suited to my long-term goals.

Again, many thanks for your time. I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors at AlliedSignal.

Sincerely,

Jessica North

**Academic & Career Advising Center  
Lancaster G08-A  
434-395-2063  
career@longwood.edu  
www.longwood.edu/career/**