

# Cover Letter Guidelines



**THE NUMBER ONE RULE FOR WRITING COVERLETTERS:**  
Tailor each cover letter to the organization to which you are writing

## Sample Outline:

(match heading resume heading)

Your address  
City, State, Zip  
Email, Phone

(1-2" top margin)

(Heading)

Date

(double space)

(Dateline)

(double space)

(Inside address)

Mr. /Ms. Name, Title  
Company  
Address  
City, State, Zip

(double space)

Dear Mr. /Ms. Last Name:

(double space)

**Introductory Paragraph:** This is the attention grabber that should arouse the reader's interest. If you are applying for a specific job, mention the position title and position number (if applicable). Give the person's name, if someone referred you to the company. This paragraph may include your knowledge of the organization, why you want to work for them and some brief background experience/education that relates to the position. Most introductory paragraphs are short, so be brief and clear.

(double space)

**Middle Paragraph:** This is the sales pitch. It is the longest of your paragraphs (may be split into two paragraphs) where you attempt to persuade the employer that you are worth an interview. Present specific abilities, education, and/or experience that make you an attractive candidate for the position. Highlight special skills. Reveal a personal goal that could be realized with this firm. Prove that your skills and abilities match the job description and can satisfy the employer's needs.

(double space)

**Final Paragraph:** This is the request for action. Ask for an interview or a meeting to discuss how your skills might assist the employer. Offer to provide more information (e.g. samples of your work, more details of your past experience or education, etc.). In most cases take the lead and indicate that you will be calling to arrange an appointment or if the employer specifically indicated not to call, you may ask them to call you. Provide your telephone number.

(double space)

Sincerely,

(complimentary close)

(four spaces)

**Signature here**

Your name

(signature block)

## **Other Rules to Remember**

- In referencing a personal referral, state that the referral suggested you write or email the contact.
- Utilize impressive quotes from letters of reference in your cover letter, e.g. I am highly organized; my internship supervisor stated in her letter of reference, "Pat is the most organized intern I have ever had."
- Use brief personal examples to back up what you say about yourself, e.g. "Several instructors have consistently commented on my excellent writing skills."
- Talk about and quantify your accomplishments that relate to the position.
- Be brief and concise, no more than one page.
- Proof-read and have others proof-read your letter for errors; the Career Center Career Counselors will help review your cover letter.
- Do not overuse "I" to begin sentences, vary the sentence structure.
- Single space within each paragraph, double space between paragraphs
- Always sign your cover letter except for email versions.
- Matching the paper and heading of your cover letter to the heading of your resume, (for hard copies), is a nice professional touch.
- If you lack a skill or some required experience discuss how you can pick up the skill quickly, or how other experience will substitute.
- It is common to have the cover letter be the text of an email, with the resume attached.

## **Mistakes to Avoid**

- Never misrepresent your background, skills and experiences.
- Never sound desperate or negative.
- Never confess shortcomings; give a positive slant to your background and experience.
- Do not repeat your resume, but summarize and enhance, add your best personality traits and adjectives that are not on the resume.
- Always send an email version of your cover letter and resume to yourself first to make sure it opens up perfectly.
- Always read and follow any employer instructions for submitting a cover letter and resume.

Advertised Opening

**GRAYSON HILL**  
**3312 Estes Park Drive**  
**Allens Park, CO 80541**  
**(970) 555-5555**  
**grahill@du.edu**

July 6, 20xx

Mr. Abe Basin  
Employment Manager  
SkiLand Company  
510 Pallavicini Alley  
Loveland, CO 80443

Dear Mr. Basin:

As an admirer of Sam Dalton, I watched several years ago when S-Mart opened a store in my hometown. I was intrigued by the wonders of mass distribution, discount prices, and retail innovation. I read in last week's edition of *Sports Retail* that one of your subsidiaries, SkiLand, is looking to grow beyond the 200 retail stores it currently operates in the Northeast. My human resource approach can help your company make sound strategic personnel decisions as you expand into the Rocky Mountain region. Your advertised position as Human Resources Manager fits perfectly with my background and experience.

For the past six years, I held increasingly responsible positions in the human resources profession. I began my career as an Assistant Store Manager at Dart Brothers, a large sporting goods store, and was promoted to Manager after 18 months. Three years ago, I accepted a position as Director of HR for Cysco, another rapidly growing distributor of food products supplying large restaurant chains. At both Dart Brothers and Cysco, I served as an HR Generalist and am very familiar with all aspects of personnel functions including: recruiting, staff planning, professional development training, working with unions, employee relations and enhancement programs as well as salary and benefits programs.

I am very enthusiastic about having an opportunity to discuss your management team's plans for the future, and the Human Resources department's role in making these goals a reality. I will call you the week of July 12th to confirm the receipt of my resume and schedule a mutually convenient time for us to get together. Thank you for your consideration and time.

Sincerely Yours,

Grayson Hill

Advertised Opening

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## Angela T. Jonesburg

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1256 S. Peach Drive, #32 ♦ Denver, CO 80215 ♦ 303.888.1234 ♦ atj@myemail.com

September 1, 20xx

Hiring Manager  
Starbucks Coffee  
1000 15<sup>th</sup> St.  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Hiring Manager:

While visiting one of your stores last week, I had a conversation with the manager, Sandy Brozowski, about the opening for a Marketing Coordinator. Through my work, internship and university experience, I am perfectly suited for the Marketing Coordinator position because my skills and knowledge match the job description.

My success and accomplishments such as the 20xx Cherry Creek Arts Festival demonstrate my ability to contribute to the Starbucks team. In order to manage the ongoing projects for the Arts Festival, I coordinated media schedules, ensured the layout and printing of collateral materials and updated all website information. To ensure that deadlines were met, I worked directly with the Arts Festival staff to guarantee their satisfaction with the marketing materials. This involved patience and flexibility in order to relay changes and requests between the client, creative team and media partners.

In addition, I can contribute to the Starbucks team in the public relations arena. I managed a campaign for the release of Gonzo Imperial Porter – a tribute beer to the infamous Hunter S. Thompson distributed by Flying Dog Brewery. I sent this press release out both locally and nationally via email to newspapers, magazines, radio stations and television stations. I then mailed key media contacts a press kit containing a photo of the Gonzo beer, a cigarette holder (one of Thompson's signature quirks) and the press release. As a result, the beer and its ties to Hunter S. Thompson were covered in *Rolling Stone*, *Playboy*, MSNBC.com, CNN.com, WB2, CBS4, Denver's 7, *The Denver Business Journal*, *The Denver Post*, and the list continues to grow.

In addition to managing campaigns, my achievements within work environments have been successful because of my ability to interact with other team members. In order to accomplish my goals, I successfully worked with people with varying personalities and working styles. My strong leadership skills contributed to the overall success of such projects as the Cherry Creek Arts Festival. These skills would greatly benefit an organization such as Starbucks.

As your Marketing Coordinator, I am enthusiastic about having an opportunity to be a part of Starbucks' plans and goals for the future. I will contact you the week of September 8<sup>th</sup> to confirm the receipt of my resume and to schedule a time for us to speak. Thank you for your consideration and time.

Sincerely,

Angela T. Jonesburg

Internship Posting

## Jason Kendall

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1435 E. Floyd Ave., Denver, CO 80498

303-987-6543

jkendal@msn.com

January 9, 20xx

Ms. Beth Tomzak  
Account Manager  
Xterra Advertising Inc.  
567 S. Logan Ave., Suite 14  
Denver, CO 80213

Dear Ms. Tomzak,

“Jason is a standout. His confidence and can-do attitude in communicating with customers of our graphic design firm have made very positive impressions. Not many interns bring such talent to the table!” My internship supervisor, Randall Stark, at Designs for Tomorrow (DfT) described me this way in his letter of recommendation. I will bring the same level of effort to an advertising account representative internship with Xterra.

My outstanding communication skills and careful attention to customer service made many clients ask for me when they had new design ideas. They knew from experience that I would follow through and quickly get the answers to their questions. As a Marketing senior (3.78 GPA) at the University of Denver, I propose to intern with you during the fall (9/1-12/31) for three afternoons per week. The customer service skills I demonstrated at DfT will be an asset to Xterra. I work hard, take initiative and pay attention to all of the details.

As an Eagle Scout, I know what commitment to excellence is all about, as do the three current U.S. Senators and the two former astronauts who were Eagle Scouts. Only 4% of all scouts reach this performance-based highest rank; demonstrated leadership and service to the community are key to making it to this level. Your customers will appreciate the high level of service I will give them.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss your goals and how I can help you meet them. I will call you early next week. My goal is that by the end of the internship, you will be impressed enough to want to keep me as an entry-level account representative!

Sincerely,

Jason Kendall

Letter of Inquiry

## BETTY E. BRECKENRIDGE

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410 Breckenridge Lane    Summit, CO 80424    (303) 453-4455    bbreck@du.edu

April 8, 20xx

Ms. Molly B. Ouray  
Senior Vice President  
MBI & Associates  
1200 Telluride Street  
Durango, CO 81302

Dear Ms. Ouray:

I was fortunate enough to see your recent quote in the *Denver Business Journal* where you described MBI & Associates' new Management Development Program as one that "hires liberal arts majors who have outstanding academic achievement tied with strong leadership and people skills." I fit that description and will be graduating this spring from the University of Denver. I am researching innovative companies like MBI & Associates where my skills and abilities can make a significant contribution.

Some of my qualifications include:

- Considerable *management and leadership experience*, most notably as *President* of my 130 member sorority, which included managing a \$110,000 budget, as well as five committees.
- *Student leader*, served as a *Senator* for two years on D.U.'s Student Government Association Senate.
- *Strong organizational and academic skills*, having maintained a 3.53 GPA while working 25 hours a week to finance 60% of my education.
- *Going beyond*, as communicated from my internship supervisor in one of my letter's of reference, "Katy has done far more in her internship than was required."
- *Excellent communication and analytical skills* developed through my English major, Psychology minor, *two years customer service experience*, and *training* six co-workers.

I will be in Durango the week of May 5-10 and would enjoy meeting with you to discuss how I might be an excellent candidate for your program. My immediate goal of entering a management training program with an energetic and growing company matches your goal of hiring students with "high-quality academic and leadership experience." I will call early next week to follow up on the possibility of our meeting to discuss future opportunities with MBI & Associates. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Betty E. Breckenridge

Informational Interview Request

## JAMES K. SMITH

1825 S. Humboldt St.  
Denver, CO 80210

303-486-3229  
jsmith2@du.edu

March 30, 20xx

Jill Anderson  
Vice President of Corporate Development, Houston Rockets  
1510 Polk Street  
Houston, TX 77002

Dear Ms. Anderson:

As a born and raised Houstonian, working with the Houston Rockets would be highly rewarding. From new and emerging trends in sports to exciting events and competitions, the sports industry is a lively world of change and opportunity. I have always been interested in the dynamic career possibilities within this field. Cindy Hanson at the University of Denver Career Center suggested I talk with you for more information about the industry and how best to enter into this exciting work.

As an International Business major at the University of Denver, my administrative skills are well developed. I have strong abilities in accounting, finance, word processing, spread sheet construction, and internet research, as well as excellent skills in working within a team setting. In addition, I have solid experience in customer service in both the hospitality setting and the marketing industry, through my work with the Hampton Inn and Ride Snowboards. These skills would prove to be invaluable to any organization.

I would appreciate the opportunity to gain some insight into how to begin my career in the sports marketing field. I will be in the Houston area in April and will contact you next week to set up a mutually convenient time for us to speak in person. I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to meeting with you soon.

Best Regards,

James Smith

Responding to a Blind Ad

## **EMILY ROBERTS**

1862 VAN WYK WAY  
ENGLEWOOD, CO 80110  
303-767-9320  
EROBERTS@MYMAIL.COM

September 1, 20xx

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am submitting my candidacy for the Customer Relations Manager position as advertised on Career Builder.

As a University of Denver honors graduate with a BSBA in Business Management, I am particularly adept in analyzing the 'big picture,' developing sustainable solutions and being fully committed to my work and the people involved. I offer my international background and knowledge of other cultures to enhance the diversity of your company.

With three years' experience in sales and project management with Charles Schwab, I leveraged my strong interpersonal skills to improve customer satisfaction and build solid working relationships with clients and staff at all levels. I developed and executed business plans, and was a key contributor in developing new business opportunities and negotiating service contract agreements.

I am confident that I can make a difference for you and your organization. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Emily Roberts