

COVER LETTERS

Your cover letter is a prospective employer's first impression of you.

With hundreds of candidates competing for the same job, your cover letter should tell the story of why you are a good choice for this employer and what sets you apart. An excellent cover letter won't make up for an ineffective resume, but a poorly written cover letter can negatively impact the impression a good resume makes.

To give the employer a compelling reason to select you for an interview, ensure your application package follows all instructions and conveys the message of "COMPETENT" and "PROFESSIONAL". While this seems daunting, a bit of preparation will insure you have a better chance of success.

1. Research the job or work you wish to be considered for

Analyze the posting. Make note of key accountabilities, specific instructions, information requested or questions asked that need to be addressed. Read similar job descriptions online from different companies to understand the larger scope of the role. What accountabilities, challenges and opportunities are common in these roles? These are key to understand what the employer will be evaluating candidates against.

2. Research the department, company and industry the company operates in

Look beyond the job posting. Find information you can use about their culture and people. What are they involved in that makes you genuinely interested in their organization? What is happening in the industry? Who are their competitors in size, location, client base?

3. Identify why you are a good choice to do the work

Using what you learned in your research, think about related tasks done at volunteer and paid experiences, skills you have been developing through assignments and projects, specific examples and results that make you a good choice to interview

4. Identify the person to whom the letter or email should be addressed

If no name is given in a posting, use their website or social media to identify who manages the department you wish to join. Only if you are absolutely unable to find a name should you resort to "Dear Hiring Manager", or "Dear Hiring Committee".

5. Demonstrate your fit and ability to think and write professionally

Write a concise, customized cover letter addressing all important and requested information. Don't repeat your resume. Connect tasks, problems or opportunities you can take on with related facts from your background as proof. Including a powerful, easy to skim, one-page cover letter that speaks in your own voice and aligns with job needs, demonstrates your comfort and skill with professional communication.

Whether indented or block format, a proper business cover letter has these common components

Chris Doe
4825 Richard Road SW
Calgary, AB T3E 6K6
LinkedIn Adress
<DATE>

Pat Smith, Manager - Guest Relations
Great Hotels
123 - 4 Street
Othertown, AB T2R 7K7

Dear Ms. Smith:

RE: Guest Relations Trainee Competition #123-45

As someone who has spent many nights in your hotels while on vacation across North America and abroad, I was excited to see this posting on the Mount Royal University Career Services job bank. You indicated a need for a post secondary graduate with face-to-face customer service experience. I have four years progressive customer service experience and will graduate from Mount Royal University in April with a Bachelor of <DEGREE>.

The announcement on your website describing the expansion plans in Quebec and Mexico was very interesting as I am fluent in written and spoken French and am able to carry on conversations in Spanish. My demonstrated strengths in customer service along with my ability to problem solve has helped increase sales in the computer department in my current role. I have experience with long time customers as well as first time buyers. I know that use of spa services and restaurants increases guest loyalty and I am looking forward to applying my track record of successful referrals to other retail departments to the hotel industry.

I am eager to use my talents in growing Guest Hotels reputation I will be in Othertown next month and would like the opportunity to interview for this position and to expand on the successes summarized on my resume. I will call next week to determine if this is possible and to arrange a convenient time. I have included the transcripts requested in the job posting. If you need any other information, please call me at 403.123.4567 or email me at cjdoe@mymtroyal.ab. Thank you for the opportunity to compete for this position. I look forward to interviewing with you.

Sincerely,

Chris Doe

Enclosure (2)

1. Complete RETURN ADDRESS of the letter writer, including telephone number and LinkedIn address (opt). Can be formatted consistent with resume heading

2. Date of the letter

3. INSIDE ADDRESS including name, title, and full address of the employer

4. SALUTATION beginning "Dear Mr." or "Dear Ms."

5. TOPIC LINE identifying the position or competition

6. LETTER BODY:

A. Opening paragraph: Connect

i. This can be a statement that shows:

- A genuine business reason of what attracts you and why you would like to contribute to this organization
- Who suggested you write/apply and why
- If not in a subject line, the type of work/position you seek

B. Competitive Positioning / Needs Matching

i. Identify your top reasons to be considered, leading with the strongest point first. This may be education, certification or relevant experience. Do not use the exact same words as on your resume. Emphasize what you can do to contribute with:

- Related education/training
- Experience at similar or related tasks (paid, in-class, volunteer, practicum)
- Specific job-content competencies, abilities and skills

C. Wrap-up paragraph/Next steps

- Thank the prospective employer
- Request an interview
- Indicate what you will do to follow up and your contact details

7. CLOSING/SIGNATURE BLOCK

A. Complimentary closing:

- Some acceptable options include "Yours truly," "Sincerely" and "Regards"

B. Signature – handwritten if mailing or hand delivered. Not required if uploading or emailing

C. Your typed name

8. ENCLOSURES NOTATION. Use Enc., Enclosure or Enclosures (3) if resume, transcripts or samples are included

Chris Doe
Calgary, Alberta T3E 6K6
403-123-4567

<DATE>

Pat Smith, Owner
Uncommon Services
2825 J. D. Street S.W.
Othertown, Sask.
S2R 7K7

Dear Mr. Smith:

A recent article in the Calgary News describing Uncommon Services' expansion plan for Alberta was very interesting and suggests you might be looking for Business Development staff to grow these new markets. I am looking for a part-time position in Calgary with possible full-time post-graduation opportunities. My experience and education would make me a good choice to grow your business as I have:

- A track record of sales achievement
- 4 years progressive customer service experience and training through retail and service jobs
- Solid success in developing relationships with customers unfamiliar with products and their uses, as well as those with strong technical expertise
- Ongoing post secondary education in ___from Mount Royal University, and
- Demonstrated ability to persuade customers to accept samples.

I am very interested to learn more about your roll-out plan and how I could be a part of your success. If you agree I may be a good fit, I would like to explain in person the successes I have summarized on my resume. I will call on <DATE+1 WEEK> to discuss the possibility of meeting to explore upcoming employment opportunities. If you need any other information, please call me at 403-123-4567 or email me at cjdoe@mymtroyal.ab. I appreciate your consideration of my request for an appointment.

Sincerely,

Chris Doe

Chris Doe

Enc.

Prerequisites to Success

- I have created a custom letter addressed to the person who has the ability to hire me.
- I have – in one page – clarified the work I am seeking, demonstrated an understanding of the central job tasks, and indicated why I believe I have the ability to handle them.
- I have restructured sentences to eliminate overuse of “I, me, my” by connecting what I say about me with specific job content needs and the position description.
- I have referenced specific knowledge and used key experiences and clear factual proofs rather than overused clichés, general traits or vague terms that could apply to anything or anyone.
- I have referenced specific information about the company, department, current announcements or events to demonstrate my genuine knowledge and interest in the organization.
- I have explained, if necessary, things not on my resume such as a referral by someone known to the reader or relocation plans if I am job searching in other cities or provinces.
- I have asked for the opportunity to interview or meet and have set a clear expectation or date that I will follow up to clarify timelines, provide additional information, arrange a time or answer questions.
- I have used a common, easy to read font and avoided using boxes, columns, framing and graphics.
- I have followed all job posting instructions, answered questions asked and eliminated all spelling, grammar and formatting errors to ensure my application is taken seriously.
- I have had a cover letter critique by Career Services to ensure I am positioning myself effectively.

Sending Your Resume and Cover Letter by Email

1. Ensure your materials are not accidentally sent before they are fully written, edited and proofread. Do not fill in the “To” field until you are sure it is ready to be sent.
2. Use the subject line strategically to ensure your email is opened. This can include the job competition number, job title, work you seek, business offer, or your name.
3. A customized mini-cover letter in the body of your email is critical to ensure it is not misidentified as spam. Attach a Word version of a formal cover letter along with a Word version of your resume or both in a single document. Check before sending PDFs as they may be unreadable by some applicant tracking software.
4. Keep this mini-cover letter short — ideally, one to one-and-a-half screen lengths. It should introduce your reasons for emailing and value to the reader. Focus on employer needs, work sought, your job-related competencies and achievements. What two to three things do you want the reader to remember?
5. Make sure to use business standards, including a professional email, a formal salutation, a closing, blank lines between paragraphs and proper sentence structure. Include your contact information below your closing/ signature line.

CAREER SERVICES

A200 Kerby Hall | 403.440.6307

studentjobs@mtroyal.ca | mtroyal.ca/careerservices