

# BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE



Types of business correspondence covered include:

- Cover Letters
- Thank You Letters
- Acceptance Letters
- Rejection Letters
- Withdrawal Letters

# GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Use professional business letter format.
- Make sure you sign all your letters in blue or black ink.
- Address cover letters to a specific person. Call if you do not have a contact person. Avoid sending letters to “Human Resources Manager” or “Hiring Coordinator.”
- Confirm gender on ambiguous names (Chris, Kelly, etc).
- Use standard, easy-to-read fonts such as Times New Roman or Arial.
- Use the same paper and font as your resume.
- Use envelopes that match your paper. Type, not handwrite, addresses on envelopes.

Proofread your letters carefully.

Use professional writing style (i.e. do not use contractions, slang, etc.) Language should be polite and to the point.

Avoid simply using photocopied “To Whom It May Concern” letters.

Don’t forget to send a cover letter with a resume and vice versa!

Don’t rush the cover letter process. Many people find that writing a cover letter is more difficult than writing a resume. Let someone in Career Services proofread drafts of your cover letter.

Keep copies of all correspondence with employers.

Use a laser printer.

Close each letter with an appropriate salutation such as Sincerely, Cordially, Gratefully, Best regards, etc.

A cover letter accompanies any correspondence to an employer where you present your resume for consideration. A cover letter allows you to showcase your writing skills and to sell yourself more directly than a resume. The purpose of a cover letter is to convey a specific message, which generates interest in you as a person and increases your chances of getting an interview. Cover letters are personalized and the content should reflect your objective and interest in that particular employer. Cover letters are generally organized into 3 or 4 paragraphs:

**First paragraph: *Introduce yourself.***

Explain why you are writing by indicating in which position you are interested. You may also reference how you learned of the company or opening (newspaper ad, mutual contact, website, etc). If you are interested in an internship, indicate such in the first paragraph and include the semester you hope to intern (i.e. “summer internship in the marketing department.”)

**Second paragraph: *Demonstrate your knowledge of the open position and the company. Sell yourself.***

The second, and sometimes third, paragraph(s) should address the employer's needs. The needs of the employer are the skills that an employer lists as requirements for a particular position.

Highlight and expand upon a few of your accomplishments from your resume, but do not simply restate your resume. You may choose to mention skills or personal characteristics that are not included in your resume. State with confidence, in assertive but pleasant language, that your demonstrated skills would be beneficial to the employer. Demonstrate knowledge you may have about the position or company (i.e. "I am impressed with ABC's steady growth and commitment to customer service.")

**Last paragraph: *Close the letter in a friendly and professional manner.***

This closing paragraph should thank the employer for his or her time and consideration and also indicate an active means in which you will follow up. (i.e. “I will contact you next week to confirm receipt of these materials.”) You may also directly ask for an interview.



Finally, avoid letters that are too long or stray from your major theme. To ensure high quality cover letters, proofread several times for content and grammar, and seek feedback from a career counselor. An error on a cover letter or resume may indicate to an employer that you are not a detail-oriented person.

# SAMPLE COVER LETTER I

You can use the same heading as your resume for a uniformed look.

**Kevin Downey**  
8651 South Howell Avenue Oak Creek, WI 53154 ♦ 414.768.8876 ♦ kbdowney@aol.com

March 25, 2007

Don't guess the gender on ambiguous first names. Whenever possible, send letter to specific person, not "Hiring Coordinator."

Mr. Chris Dunkin  
Director of Human Resources  
Upscale Corporation  
6201 Washington Avenue  
Racine, WI 53406

Dear Mr. Dunkin:

I am very impressed with the recent growth of Upscale Corporation, so it was with great interest that I read your advertisement in The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. I will be graduating from Carthage College in June with a degree in Marketing. Please accept the enclosed resume as indication of my interest in a sales representative position with your company.

Highlight a few key points and accomplishments. Avoid simply restating your resume.

As part of my degree requirements, I have taken courses in marketing, advertising, and management. All of these courses, combined with my liberal arts education, provide me with a strong foundation for a career in sales. Additionally, I worked as a sales trainee with XYZ Industries for the past two summers. This work experience provided me with the opportunity to closely interact with retailers in the distribution of XYZ products. Through persistence, hard work, and my ability to relate well with people, I was able to contribute to a 50 percent increase in sales.

Quantify as much as possible.

I believe my educational background and experience fit well with the expectations your corporation has outlined for the vacant sales representative position. I welcome the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications with you. I will contact you within a few days to discuss a possible interview. Thank you for your consideration.

Indicate an active means of follow up. Do what you say you will!

Sincerely,

Don't forget to sign your letter.

Kevin Downey

Encl.

## SAMPLE COVER LETTER II

**This is an example of a standard professional business letter heading.**

John Reid  
11229 Oak Street  
Pleasant Prairie, WI 53158  
(262) 942-6768  
reid@carthage.edu

May 5, 2007

Dr. Claudia Thompson  
Director, Research Operations  
BioTech Advantage  
2133 Half Day Road  
Lincolnshire, IL 60052

**Use your networking contacts as much as possible in your job search.**

Dear Dr. Thompson:

At the suggestion of our mutual friend, Professor David Hill, I am writing to you today to express my interest in working in the Research and Development division of BioTech Advantage. I will be receiving my Bachelor of Arts degree in biology from Carthage College at the end of this month. I have enclosed my resume for your review.

As your website indicates, BioTech Advantage seeks hardworking, flexible individuals with exceptional scientific knowledge and problem solving capabilities to serve its clients. As you can see from the attached resume, my particular skills and interests include:

- Summer internship experiences in both Research and Development at Abbott Laboratories and the Medical Lab at St. Luke's Hospital
- Honors in Senior Thesis "Asexual Reproduction in Clonal Genotypes in *Haliplanella lineata*"
- Advanced lab skills including spectrometry, PCR, Gel Electrophoresis, DNA and RNA Isolation Techniques, Light and Electron Microscopy
- Knowledge of laboratory sterilization and safety procedures
- Strong computer skills including SPSS, HTML, and Java capabilities
- Excellent communication skills, leadership potential, and the ability to manage my time effectively.

I believe that my unique combination of skills and experiences would fit well with the demands of the position. I am greatly interested in the field of medical biology and understand that BioTech Advantage is making great strides in the advancement of medical technology.

Dr. Thompson, thank you for your time and consideration. I would be delighted to meet with you, at your convenience, to discuss our mutual goals. I will contact you early next week to confirm receipt of these materials. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

John Reid

Enclosure

**You may elect to use a bulleted list in your resume instead of a paragraph form. This allows you to showcase your main selling points in a format that is easy to read.**

## SAMPLE INTERNSHIP COVER LETTER

**Erica R. Smith**

erica83@yahoo.com

Carthage College Box 777  
2001 Alford Park Drive  
Kenosha, WI 53140  
262/551.5555

1252 Green Bay Road  
Highland Park, IL 60043  
847/735.5665

**When writing a business letter to a woman, always use the title "Ms.," regardless of her marital status, unless she holds a professional title such as "Dr."**

January 19, 2007

Ms. Carrie Brown  
Hiring Coordinator  
Windy City Events  
16 East Pearson Street  
Chicago, IL 60610

Dear Ms. Brown:

**For internships, indicate for which term you would like to work.**

I am writing in response to the Communications Intern position that was posted on [www.monstertrak.com](http://www.monstertrak.com). I am a junior at Carthage College and am interested in interning at Windy City Events beginning in early June, earning credit for the summer term. An internship at Windy City Events would compliment my communications coursework.

**Quantify as much as possible.**

As my resume indicates, I possess excellent experience in special events planning. As Social Chair for the Residence Life Council, I organized a successful "Campus Carnival 2007," an outdoor event in which 47 different student organizations hosted game booths with profits donated to a charity of the organization's choice. This event, the first of its kind at Carthage, attracted over 500 students and raised close to \$4,000. Through this experience of motivating other students, coordinating details with vendors, and publicizing the event, I realized my talent for event planning. I have also been actively involved in other student organization while effectively balancing my academic work.

**You may elect to include an additional paragraph outlining your personal skills and characteristics.**

I am highly organized, detail-oriented, and creative. My peers would describe me as enthusiastic and hard working. I am eager to learn the different facets of event planning and believe that you would be impressed with my work ethic and interpersonal communication skills.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will be contacting you in early February regarding a possible interview date. Should you have questions before that, please feel free to contact me.

**The "Encl." abbreviation indicates that additional materials (such as your resume) are enclosed with this letter.**

Cordially,

Erica Smith

Encl.