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Alumni Association of the University of Michigan

COVER LETTER GUIDE



ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION

INTRODUCTION

While your resume is a summary of your background and qualifications, your cover letter explains why you're sending in a resume and should always be included in a job application.

HEADING

Contact Information

Date

Address of the company/organization

If possible, use the name of person in charge of unit or department/name of Hiring Manager by searching online (company website or directory). This signals seriousness of intent. If you cannot find a name, Hiring Manager will suffice.

EXAMPLE

Maize A. Blue
200 Fletcher St
Ann Arbor, 48109
800 847 4764
example@gmail.com

September 1, 2019
Ms. Smith
Wolverine Inc.
1000 Job Rd.
Chicago, IL 62249

INTRODUCTION

Provide greeting to specific person with whom you are corresponding. If no name available, Dear Hiring Manager will suffice.

State the position you are applying for and how you found out about it. If you heard of the position via a professional connection, check with them and ask if you might mention them here.

State how your experience matches the position. Include 2-3 key qualifications that you will address in the rest of the letter (these items should match up with your resume).

EXAMPLE

Dear Ms. Smith:

I was elated to hear about your new position of LEAN Manager from my colleague, Natalia Medina who works in the St Mary's Health System Operations Team, and would like to meet with you to discuss this opportunity further. With the advent of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the position presents an excellent opportunity to work on some of the complex challenges currently facing the healthcare industry, as well as St Mary's. I believe my 10 years' experience as a healthcare operations consultant and manager have given me both the depth and breadth of skill and experience needed by St Mary's to tackle challenges which include among others, rising budgetary constraints and system inefficiencies.

BODY/ARGUMENT

Tailor cover letter to company and position to be more effective (through company research via informational interviews, website review and online reading). Do not use the same cover letter for different job applications.

Recognize organizational need (as mentioned in job description) and make your claim as to how you can help them (that you have the matching skills).

Give specific examples to support your claim

Refer to your resume (do not repeat it verbatim)

EXAMPLE

After speaking with Ms. Medina, it seems St. Mary's is facing some unique goals, which include, St. Mary's goal to increase profit through eliminating waste and reducing inefficiencies by reaching a six sigma level of 3.5- an inspiring organizational goal. My LEAN Six Sigma Master Blackbelt certification, as well as 10 years' experience in teaching and applying LEAN principles in practice, leads me to believe my background and skill closely matches this goal. This can be further illustrated by the 2 year project I lead with the University of Michigan Health System with regard to inventory management of heart apparatus at the Cardiovascular Center. This process improvement project enabled the organization to save \$1.6M per year by uncovering a series of complex suboptimization flaws and resulted in a re-engineering of order entry processes. These skills of data collection, value stream mapping, advanced root cause analysis and change management will help St. Mary's achieve both its short term budget constraints and its long term goal of achieving a 3.5 sigma level.

CLOSING

Close with a strong reminder of why you are a good match for the job and the organization.

Request an interview in some way.

Provide contact information.

Express appreciation for consideration

Sign your name and print it underneath.

EXAMPLE

I believe my work experience in LEAN will provide the leadership needed in your Operations team for St. Mary's in attain its waste reduction and streamlining goals. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss the position and ways I can support St. Mary's further. I may be reached at 000 000 0000, or by e-mail at maizeandblue@email.com. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Maize A. Blue
(Enclosure)

FORMAT AND STRUCTURE BEST PRACTICES

We suggest a conventional approach to cover letters. While there may be creative positions that call for a different approach, the majority of applications call for a conventional business format. Impress readers with excellent content as well as elegant, clear formatting.

- Single-space your cover letter
- Leave a space between each paragraph
- Leave three spaces between your closing (such as "Sincerely") and typed name
- Leave a space between your heading (contact information) and greeting (such as, "Dear Mr. Smith")
- Either align all paragraphs to the left of the page, or indent the first line of each paragraph to the right
- Use standard margins for your cover letter, such as one-inch margins on all sides of the document
- Center your letter in the middle of the page; in other words, make sure that the space at the top and bottom of the page is the same
- Sign your name between your salutation and typed name
- Include the word Enclosure after your name to indicate the inclusion of a resume
- Always match the paper and font style of your resume to your cover letter