Cover Letter Handbook


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As a job seeker, you will find yourself writing several types of job search letters. The most common of these is the application letter, typically called a cover letter. (Samples of the other types of letters can be found on pages 9-15 in this handbook.) It’s not appropriate to send a resume to someone without explaining why. Whether you are mailing, faxing, or e-mailing your resume, it is important to provide a cover letter (or cover message in the case of an e-mail) in order to explain your situation, highlight your key qualifications, and ask the recipient for some kind of action or response.

NOTE: A poorly written letter can nullify all the hours of work you have spent on your resume, so make sure your cover letter reflects the same level of professional preparation.

General Guidelines for Writing Cover Letters

Both your resume and your cover letter should be able to stand alone and spark the reader’s interest, but as a coordinated presentation they can be doubly effective. Make sure your resume and cover letter complement each other. For the most effective cover letter, follow these guidelines:

1. Write to someone in particular
   Never send a cover letter to “whom it may concern.” If you do not know the appropriate person’s name, go the extra mile and do some research to discover the name of the person who will be doing the hiring for the position you are interested in. Look on the company’s web site (there may be an employee directory), call the organization and ask for the name of the head of the appropriate department, or try to find a current employee who can find out the name for you. If your research fails to locate a name, your best bet is to use a salutation such as “Dear Hiring Manager” or Dear Director of [Finance].” The bottom line: When you target your cover letter to a specific person, you greatly decrease the chance that your letter will be tossed immediately in the rejection pile.

   TIP: If the name is unavailable, you may want to add this personal note, either in the body of the letter or as a postscript: “I’m sorry for this impersonal greeting in my cover letter. I was unable to find your name online. However, I look forward to the opportunity to meet you in person so I can address you by name and discuss this job opening. I am highly interested in working for [company].”

2. Make absolutely no mistakes
   Review your letters carefully to make sure that they contain no typographical, grammatical, or other errors. Do not rely on spell check! Ask several people who are knowledgeable about cover letters to proofread for you. (Career Center staff members are very willing to critique and proofread your letters.) Make sure you spell the name of the hiring official correctly and use his or her correct title. If you are not 100% certain, check to verify that you have the correct information.
3. Personalize your content
Your cover letter should never look like a form letter. Standard template letters never fool anyone, especially those who read cover letters on a regular basis. However, that does not mean you can’t use some of the same material in multiple cover letters, especially in your closing and middle paragraphs. Each letter should appear to be customized for a particular job or company. If you can’t customize your letter in some way, don’t send it!

4. Make sure your letter looks attractive
All your job search correspondence should look as professional as possible, so buy good quality stationery and matching envelopes for times you’ll be mailing or hand-delivering a letter and resume. Use standard 8 ½ x 11 paper. For colors, we recommend white, ivory, light beige, or light gray--whatever matches your resume paper.

Use a standard business letter format that complements your resume type and format. Your envelope should also be typed carefully, without errors. You may use the standard business-sized envelope, but if you prefer not to fold your resume, use a white 9 x 12 envelope.

Keep your letter to no longer than one page to hold interest. Ideally, paragraphs should be no longer than five or six lines or the text will appear too dense and the letter uninviting. Rather than telling the employer everything about yourself, choose the most important, most compelling and most relevant information for that particular job.

—if necessary, break overly long paragraphs into multiple paragraphs, or separate some into bullet points that make it easier for the reader to quickly skim your letter.

5. Target your skills and experiences
To do this well, you must know something about the organization, the job opportunity and/or the person to whom you are applying. Present any relevant background that you think may be of particular interest. Draw on your research about typical job duties and responsibilities for positions you are interested in or take your cue from a job description and highlight the experiences and skills that best match those the employer is looking for.

—if necessary, break overly long paragraphs into multiple paragraphs, or separate some into bullet points that make it easier for the reader to quickly skim your letter.

TIP: Most people assume that the cover letter should be about you. In reality, a good cover letter is employer-focused. The most effective approach is to clearly demonstrate your knowledge of the company’s needs and how you can meet those needs.

6. Close with an action statement
Don’t end your letter without clearly identifying what you will do next. Leaving it up to the employer to contact you doesn’t encourage a response. Close on a positive note and let the employer know how and when you will be following up. The sample cover letters in this handbook will give you ideas about how to do this without sounding aggressive.
It is very important that you do follow-up! Otherwise, you will damage your credibility. Not only that, but following up while your material is fresh in the employer's mind will make the conversation more productive. Even employers who are anxious to hire don’t always have time to follow up, so make their job easier by being the one to take the responsibility.

TIP: In the rare case when follow-up is not possible (for example, in response to a blind ad), you can still keep your closing assertive and action-oriented. See example on page 11.)

7. Use the appropriate closing
Use “Sincerely” or “Respectfully.” Other closings may sound too casual. Skip four spaces, then type your name. Sign your letter in black or blue ink in the blank space above your typed name.

Ideas for Creating an Effective Opening Paragraph

Always try to open your letter with an approach that will catch the reader’s eye. Make sure to express your enthusiasm for the position and aim for setting a personalized, warm, yet business-like tone. You may be able to start your letter with a reminder of connections you may have with the organization. You can give details about how you heard of the position or explain a networking connection. A compelling opening paragraph can also be inspired by interesting industry statistics, trends, or quotes. Here are a few ideas:

1. Quote a recent article
When I read in Business First about your new acquisition of XYZ Company, I realized you would need to hire additional IT staff. Your web site emphasized the efficiency of your staff, and I believe my ability to effectively manage multiple responsibilities is one of my strongest traits.

2. Use someone else’s name to introduce yourself
Mr. Smith recently spoke to our accounting class and he suggested that I write to you about possible openings at your firm.

Mr. James Walker, who is my supervisor at ABC Company, recommended that I write to you about a sales position in your pharmaceutical division because he said I would be “perfect” for your company.

3. Quote a recent industry statistic
Environmental science technicians are in short supply because of the growing focus on pollution control and contamination clean up according to a recent article in Our Planet. If you are experiencing this shortage at Monitortech Corporation, I believe you will be interested in my qualifications as a environmental technician and my strong desire to join your team.”
4. Lead with one of your most relevant successes
Under my leadership, the Community Service Club at Otterbein University grew from fifteen to thirty-five members in two years. I’d like to speak to you about how I might use my recruiting abilities as a Volunteer Coordinator for the Kidney Foundation.

5. Refer to the company’s job vacancy ad
Several qualifications mentioned in your ad for [job title] suggest you may be looking for someone with my background.

I was intrigued when I read your ad for [job title] by your emphasis on both writing skills and scientific background.

Your advertised opening for a Market Development Assistant describes interesting challenges. My education and accomplishments seem to be a good match for your needs, and I’d like to explore this opportunity with you.

6. Use a direct quote
“Companies succeed by hiring the right people—people who want to make a difference, not just do a job.” When I read this statement in your interview that was recently published in The Columbus Dispatch, I knew that Cardinal Health was a great fit for my energy and passion as well as my skills in public relations.

7. Offer the reader an immediate benefit
One of the things that you can’t fail to notice in my resume is my ability to manage a very busy and demanding schedule. This is one of the traits that make me an ideal candidate for the Account Manager position that is currently open at [company].

Enthusiastic, energetic, people-oriented, responsible, and innovative: these are five adjectives my colleagues would use to describe me.

**Tips for Your Second Paragraph**

1. Expand on the reader’s initial interest
Expand on the information in your first paragraph. Relate additional reasons to consider you as a candidate. Describe the results you have obtained and past accomplishments and why you are certain these could be translated to future success at that particular company. Remember that no amount of self-praise can sell you as effectively as listing specific, measurable accomplishments.
2. Make your sentence structure concise and clear
Don’t bury important ideas in clichés. Your goal should be to use the right word at the right time in the proper context. Apply the KISS formula: keep it simple and straightforward.

3. Use “bridge” words and a logical progression
Use words between sentences to unify the paragraph such as “on the other hand,” “furthermore,” “consequently,” “for example,” “similarly,” etc. The ideas in the second paragraph should flow logically. You may choose to start with your most important qualification, or begin with lower priority qualifications and build to describing your strongest trait at the end the paragraph.

4. Use the word “you” often
This makes the reader think you are writing a personal letter, and they will be likely to remain more interested in it. The “you” attitude is also conveyed by focusing less on what you want and more about what the prospective employer wants. Try to avoid starting too many sentences with the word “I,” a very common fault in many cover letters.

5. Respond to the qualifications of the job, stated or implied
Personalize your information, making it relevant to the company to which you are responding.

For example, if they seek leadership skills, you can say you have experience organizing groups, effectively directing others, taking acceptable risks, winning others’ confidence, making difficult decisions, gaining others’ cooperation, or facilitating change.

If they are seeking management skills, you can say you have experience forming objectives, managing time and energy, coping with change, establishing priorities, building a team, encouraging team work, delegating responsibilities, or anticipating future needs.

If they are seeking communication skills, you can say that you have experience explaining concepts well, writing convincingly, asking strategic questions, listening effectively, reporting accurately, or speaking persuasively.

Use the exact wording of an ad only in a target letter format. (See an example on page 13.)

Your Closing Paragraph

Your closing paragraph can briefly summarize your interest in and qualifications for the position. It may also refer the reader to your resume or any other enclosed documents. This is the place to graciously thank the reader for taking time to read your letter. Most important, the most effective final paragraphs describe how and when you will follow up with the employer.
Finding the Right Words

If you want to emphasize your leadership qualities, use words like:

- initiate
- invent
- persist
dare to
get the job done
results oriented
- unafraid to
- independent
- self-starter
reach set goals
explore
- pioneer
- challenge
- assertive
refuse to quit
direct
- decisive
- determined
- risk
- speak freely about
enjoy challenges
- work fast
- compete with
- set priorities

If you want to emphasize your people-orientation, use words like:

- persuade
- convince
- inspired by
personable
- excited about
- interact well
- well-spoken
- outgoing
confident
- liked by others
optimistic
- enthusiastic
- manage
influence
- enjoy group work
people-oriented
- team projects
- sincere
congenial
easy to work with

If you want to emphasize your reliability, use words like:

- assist
- help
- devoted
loyal
- remain calm
- meet goals
- patient
- moderate
control
- willing
accommodate
- trusted
- listen well
hard worker
- spend long hours
diligent
- professional
- dependable
systematic
teamwork oriented
comply with rules
- hard worker
- perfectionist
comply with rules
- high standards

The Best Time to Send Your Application Letters

1. Be strategic about when you send/deliver your letters

   Mondays always bring the heaviest load of mail, and Fridays find employees trying to complete tasks before the week is over. Therefore, it is usually wise to time your letters for a middle of the week arrival.

When responding to a newspaper ad, it is especially important to be as prompt as possible because employers will frequently arrange an interview with the first interested and qualified candidate. Sometimes hand delivering a resume and cover letter can really pay off, especially if you make a good impression with the secretary. You may even be able to meet the person who could hire you, allowing them to put a “face” with a resume.
2. Be patient
You should not expect to get a response from the majority of your letters. Directing your letter to a specific job lead or a specific person typically results in a 20 to 30 percent response rate. If you send “template” letters to random positions that sound interesting, you will do well to get a 5 to 10 percent response. Remember that any mail campaign should be limited and targeted, and using networking contacts to uncover potential job openings is the most effective approach. Take time to properly research each of the targeted companies you contact. Then be sure to follow-up with a phone call later. Sound like a lot of work? It is, but not when you consider the pay back!

E-Mailed Letters

It is important that you take as much care with an E-mail cover letter as you would with a more traditional letter. Don’t let the informality of E-mail fool you into thinking it is not as important to tailor your message or proofread your document. Make sure to follow the same guidelines as those for the more traditional cover letter.

Create your E-mail messages separately in your word-processing field, then copy and paste them into the E-mail message area. This way you won’t be tempted to skip the proofreading and spell-checking stages, and you’ll find it easier to file and re-use your cover letters if you keep them in a separate documents file.

When sending an E-mail, it is not necessary to include the inside address, nor do you have to type the date. Just start with your salutation (Dear Ms. Anderson). Unless you are already on a close first-name basis, we don’t recommend that you use a person’s first name. Definitely do not use an informal greeting such as “Hey, Frank.” In many cases your E-mail will be printed out and attached to your resume in the company files or shared with others on the hiring team. It is important to establish the right tone, message, and impression.

The subject line of your E-mail is important. It will help the recipient understand why you are writing (and thus keep your letter out of the spam file) and, later, can refresh his or her memory about who you are and what value you offer. Consider a subject line like one of these:

   SUBJECT: Application for Accounting Position, Jennifer Warren
   SUBJECT: Follow-up re: Public Relations position, K. Simpson
   SUBJECT: Interview Mon. 11/22 – Jim Walker

The best approach is to attach your resume as a Microsoft Word file, as this is the format that is preferred by most recipients. If you are not certain, you may also include a text version in the body of the e-mail with the following explanation: “My resume is attached in a Word file, but I have also pasted the text version below for your convenience.”
Sample Cover Letters

Sample 1: response to a posted internship position – pg. 9

Sample 2: response to listing on employer web page – pg. 10

Sample 3: inquiry about potential openings – pg. 11

Sample 4: response to blind newspaper ad – pg. 12

Sample 5: e-mail cover message – pg. 13

Sample 6: targeted letter, two column – pg. 14

Sample 7: targeted letter – pg. 15

Sample 8: inquiry letter using a referral – pg. 16
Ms. Beverly Smith  
Director of Human Resources  
Aon Consulting  
P.O. Box 23  
Findlay, Ohio 45839

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am writing to express my interest in the Marketing Intern position you posted recently online at Otterbein Cardinal Careers. I am very interested in building on my current experience in marketing by exploring additional ways that Internet technology can be used as a marketing and recruiting tool.

As you will note in my resume, I have had practical experience as a file clerk in the marketing department at Acme Ace Corporation. This summer position provided me with an opportunity to get some hands-on experience in analyzing data for various marketing research projects. Additionally, I was able to use some of the skills I acquired from my computer science class as I collaborated with my supervisor in creating two PowerPoint presentations. In my retail sales jobs I have participated in the sales process, responded to customer inquiries and problems, and helped develop sales strategies to meet the needs of customers. The combination of my academic background with the “real world” experience gained in the workplace will help me contribute to the on-going success of Aon Consulting.

I am very excited about the possibility of working with a company that is experiencing unprecedented growth and has established itself as one of the emerging leaders in this competitive industry. I would like to discuss the internship position with you further, and I will call your office the week of January 28 to arrange an appointment. I like Aon’s slogan of “Ensure Your Vision,” and I hope to ensure mine with Aon.

Sincerely,

Julie Gibbons

Julie Gibbons  
Enclosure
July 12, 20__

Mr. John Overholt
Director of Human Resources
HighRise Hotels
2115 Spring Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Mr. Overholt:

While surfing the Internet, I found a link to your web page and was truly impressed by what I read. The HighRise Hotels have served as landmarks for me when I travel and I have always been impressed with the quality of service I received as a guest at your hotels. I am intensely interested in contributing my skills and experience to your organization because of your reputation for quality; therefore the Assistant Manager position opening listed on your “Career Opportunities” page is of special interest to me.

In June I will be graduating from Otterbein University with a bachelor’s degree in management. While in school, I developed strong organizational and customer service skills that will serve me well as a hotel manager. I have consistently sought out situations where I have a chance to interact with the public. Through the waiter and telemarketing jobs I had in college, I learned to respond quickly in fast-paced situations and communicate well with a wide range of personalities. As a resident assistant for two years, I organized over eight social and educational events for students, negotiated conflicts between roommates, and led a committee that planned an overnight camping event in which over 25 students participated.

My organizational skills were honed during my internship with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, where I developed schedules for four volunteer groups, organized the volunteers for the annual phone-a-thon, and solicited donations for and hosted the raffle table at a money-raising event involving over 300 people. I also discovered that I sincerely enjoy meeting the public and working as part of a team to solve problems and manage projects.

I truly believe my experiences qualify me for a management position at HighRise Hotels. I will call you next week to set up a meeting at your convenience. Should you require additional information, I can be contacted at the phone number listed above. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Emery Taylor

Emery Taylor

Enclosure
Sample Letter 3: This letter explores potential job openings rather than responding to an advertised opening. Strong connections are made between a previous job and the one being sought.

JOHN HUANG

phone: (614) 4546-0929 • cell: (203) 303-1276 • e-mail: JHUANG@SNET.NET
residence: 459 PARK STREET • COLUMBUS, OH
mailing address: P.O. BOX 29 • WESTERVILLE, OH 43081

April 3, 20__

Dr. Thomas Manfred
Ross Products Division
585 Cleveland Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Dr. Manfred:

Recently you were a speaker in my Special Topics chemistry class. I found the presentation to be extremely informative and was especially impressed by your company’s leading edge work in diagnostic testing. Knowing of my interest in obtaining a position as a chemist, my instructor, Dr. Quantum, suggested that I contact you. Looking at your web site, I saw that you have some career opportunities for recent graduates in your product testing labs.

I will graduate in June with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry, following the American Chemical Society Certified curriculum. I also minored in Life Science, and as a result, my degree plan has included a broad range of courses. I have had several meaningful work experiences that have enhanced my analytical, problem solving, and communication skills. My position at Southampton Labs required me to do work very similar to that which you described in your class presentation. I had the opportunity to work side by side with a team of three full-time chemists as we tested and analyzed over 15 products on a daily basis. This experience taught me the importance of teamwork and open communication. Because I have had to finance 100% of my own education, time management skills and a strong work ethic were of the utmost importance. My college experience has been quite a challenge with working, being active on campus, and still maintaining high academic standards, but I have always been one to face challenges head on.

I hope that these are the kinds of skills that you are looking for at Ross Labs. I would like to meet with you to discuss possible openings for entry-level chemists. Next week I will call you to discuss a potential interview time. I am confident my skills and experience will enable me to make an immediate contribution to your company.

Sincerely,

John Huang

John Huang

Enclosure: resume
Letter 4: Response to a blind ad on a big job board. In this case, the employer is not known and it is impossible to follow-up. Note the prominent display of information about relocation plans.

Antonio Riaz
Cell: 614-823-1698
Relocating to Florida June 2005 antonioriaz@aol.com

RE: IS Technical Support position, Monster.com, April 27, 20__

As a new graduate with a degree in computer science and significant internship and work experience in the field of information technology, I have the skills and work ethic that can benefit your company.

In brief, I offer

- A Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, with courses in programming, software development, operating systems, database management and data warehousing.

- Two years of experience as computer assistant at a public library where I assisted with computer searches, maintained a database, worked with the MIS department on a number of projects, and trained new employees.

- Internship experience at Crow, Chizek and Company, where I diagnosed and corrected software and network problems and developed the ability to work in a fast-paced environment.

- Familiarity with MS-DOS, UNIX, and Internet and programming capability in Modula-2, C and Assembler languages.

- Proven dedication to my job, evidenced by receiving the “Employee of the Month” award twice as an intern.

I have been a regular visitor to Florida to visit family for more than five years and now plan to make the state my permanent home. The position with your company sounds like an excellent fit for my skills and experience, and I would like to share my ideas with you while learning more about your current and future challenges. May we schedule a time to talk? You can reach me most easily on my cell phone, 614-823-1698.

Sincerely,

Antonio Riaz

Antonio Riaz

Enclosure
SUBJECT: Follow-up to discussion re: pharmaceutical sales

Dear Ms. Andreatti:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about careers in pharmaceutical sales. Since our discussion, I have been researching and discovering more about the field and from what I have learned, Pharmedix is the right company and sales is the right profession for me!

Throughout my college career and employment experience, I have consistently thrived in demanding and result-focused assignments, proving that I can bring the following qualities to Pharmedix:

- **Outstanding leadership and communication skills**, demonstrated in diverse roles where I have shown the ability to contribute, motivate, inspire, and build consensus.

- **Sales and customer focus**, repeatedly proven in challenging business environments. I have participated in the sales process, prepared presentations, responded to customer inquiries and problems, and developed programs to meet the needs of customers and constituents.

- **Education achievement**. I am about to graduate from Otterbein University with a 3.4 GPA and a BS degree in Marketing. In leadership roles with several organizations, I have coordinated very successful campus programs, directed teams, and built support for new ideas.

I hope you will agree that I can be successful in a sales role for your company. I will call you next week to see whether we can schedule a time to meet.

Again, thank you for your support and assistance.

Sincerely,

Troy Harris

***************
My resume is attached as a Word file, and a text version is also pasted below for your convenience.
Joshua Trent
434 Parkview Crescent, Gahanna, Ohio 43056 • 614-454-2314 • jtrent@verizon.net

March 15, 20__

Mr. Frank Kohler
Metatech Media
P.O. Box 4569
Indianapolis, Indiana 46201

Dear Mr. Kohler:

When I read in *Indianapolis Herald* about the expansion of the communications department of Metatech Media, I was excited to learn that you would need to hire additional writing staff. My skills and experience are an excellent match for the advertised position of Corporate Communications Staff Writer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your requirements</th>
<th>The relevant experience, skills, and values I offer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 years business writing experience……</td>
<td>Two years combined experience as an intern, part-time contract worker, full-time summer employee, and with college media organizations, from corporate communications to feature articles and radio broadcast material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to complete projects on deadline….</td>
<td>Proven coordination skills and tight deadline focus. My current role as editor of the school newspaper requires planning, coordination and execution of many detailed tasks, always in the face of inflexible deadlines. Have been able to successfully balance school work, an internship, and leadership roles in several campus organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentation skills……</td>
<td>Experience as on-air presence and “the voice” for an on-hold telephone message company. Participated in debate and oratory competitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant education (BS or BA)…..</td>
<td>BA in Organizational Communication, with minor areas of study in broadcasting and journalism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you will note in the enclosed resume, my experience encompasses corporate, print media and multimedia environments. I hope these are the kinds of skills that you are looking for. I would very much like to meet with you regarding this position. If I have not heard from you by March 30, I will contact you to arrange an interview to discuss my qualifications. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joshua Trent

Joshua Trent
April 30, 20__

Ms. Deborah Wright  
Office of Human Resources  
Northeastern College of Medicine  
4208 State Street  
Rootstown, OH  44272

Dear Ms. Wright:

Your career vacancy listing on Monster.com for an admission officer at the Akron College of Medicine caught my interest immediately. The position described sounds like the perfect match for my skills and experience.

You require:

A degree in business of a related field  
In June I will graduate from Otterbein University with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration with a concentration in marketing.

Prior admission experience  
As a member of my university’s Host and Tour program for the past two years, I have led over fifty prospective students and their families on tours of the campus and have answered their questions about the admission process.

Experience with marketing materials  
During my internship with a public relations firm, I was part of a team that developed a recruiting brochure for a pharmaceutical company.

Familiarity with a college office setting  
I have worked as an office assistant in several offices on campus including the admission office, the alumni office and the business department, where I have developed reception, telephone and computer skills.

Experience with organizing receptions  
As a freshman orientation assistant, I helped coordinate the opening reception for new students and their parents, which involved training students to “meet and greet” new students, arranging for food and scheduling faculty greeters.

I am excited about this position at the College of Medicine as I enjoy the higher education setting and am sure that I would be able to make a valuable contribution to your admission efforts. I will call you next week to further discuss my qualifications. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jerrod Westlake
Sample 8: This letter uses a referral to make a quick connection between the writer and reader.

1860 William Way
Gahanna, OH  43045

July 18, 20__

Mr. Henry Hireman
Director of Public Relations
The Enterprise Group
345 Fulton Street
Columbus, OH  43215

Dear Mr. Hireman:

I had a brief conversation earlier today with Rudy Fitch, the personnel manager in your company, and he suggested that I get in touch with you about an opening in your department.

I am a recent graduate of Otterbein University and my current goal is to find an entry-level position in a public relations firm such as yours.

As my resume indicates, I was actively involved in public relations during my junior and senior years in college as the publicity chair of PRSSA and as an intern in a nonprofit organization and at Clary Communications. I am very familiar with basic public relations skills: I know how to write press releases, arrange press conferences and have already developed some strong relationships with the news media. In addition, I have been involved in planning a number of events, most notably during my internship when I assisted in implementing a trade fair at the Columbus Convention Center attended by over 400 people.

Mr. Fitch did mention to me that quite a number of people have applied for this position, but based on what I know about the Enterprise Group and my particular skills, I think that not only could I be a great asset to your company, but I could begin making a contribution almost immediately.

I would welcome a chance to meet with you personally and will call you next week to discuss a possible time. Thank you so much for your interest and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bradley Quicklearner
Other Types of Job Search Correspondence

In addition to a letter that “covers” your resume, you may need to write other types of letters as well: thank-you notes, letters accepting or declining a job offer or letters to inquire about the status of a search.

Thank You Letters

You should always write thank you letters after a job or information interview or whenever someone has helped you in any way during your job search. Here are some tips for writing thank you letters:

1. Decide whether e-mail or snail mail makes more sense
Consider the timing involved and the formality of the organization you’re sending to. If you need to get a letter out quickly after a job interview because you know the employer will be making a decision soon, then E-mail is your best bet. Use regular mail if there is no rush or you sense that the person would appreciate a letter written on nice paper and received in the mail. Most people do! You may also send an immediate short E-mail message and follow-up with a hand-written one a day later.

2. Use high quality paper and envelopes
Most stationery stores have thank-you note cards in a variety of styles. Select a note that is simple and professional. Avoid illustrations and “inspirational” quotes. A blank card or a simple “Thank You” on the front will do. For a professional look, match your thank-you note paper to your resume. Recommended colors are off-white, beige or ivory.

3. Hand written or typed is acceptable, but hand written is more personal
Traditionally, thank-you notes were always handwritten, but typing them is acceptable today. If your handwriting is good and your letter is short, we recommend that you send a hand written note, as this is an especially nice touch. If your writing is illegible, or if your letter is more than two paragraphs, you will create a better impression by using your word processor.

4. Use a formal salutation
Don’t use a first name unless you are already on a first-name basis with the person you are thanking. Use “Dear Ms. Black” or “Mr. Jones” rather than the less formal “Dear Pam.” Write the date above the salutation.

5. Keep the note informal and friendly
This type of note is a thank-you for what someone else did, not a hard-sell sales pitch for what you want. Refer to some part of the personal conversation. Express your enthusiasm for the position, department and company. Make sure to remind the interviewer of your skills or other qualifications that are relevant to the job. This lets the thank-you note serve as not only an expression of appreciation but also as a chance to reinforce your interest in the position. Make
sure your letter does not sound like a form letter. Put some time and effort into tailoring it to the recipient and the situation.

6. Format
If you hand write your letter, you may use the simple form shown in Example 1 on page 18, with the date preceding the salutation. If word processed, you should include the person’s name, company and address like in the formal cover letter.

7. Tell how you will follow up
As appropriate, be specific about when you will next contact the person. If you plan to meet soon, still send a note saying you look forward to the meeting and say thank you for the appointment. Make sure that you include something to remind the employer of who you are and how to reach you, since your name alone may not be enough to be remembered.

8. Sign it
Sign your first name and last name. Avoid initials and make your signature legible.

9. Send it right away
Write and send your letter no later than 24 hours after you make your contact. Ideally, you should write it immediately after the contact, while details are still fresh in your mind.

Samples of Job Search Correspondence

Thank-You Sample #1: Thank you after an interview

May 23, 20__

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you very much for today’s interview. It was interesting to compare our recent European travel adventures.

I have a very positive feeling about the prospect of joining such a dynamic and diversified company as Aon Consulting. As we discussed, I believe the combination of my educational background in business and my previous work experience will enable me to make a smooth transition into this marketing internship.

Should you have additional questions, feel free to contact me at 823-3000 or via e-mail at jgibbons@otterbein.edu. Thank you again for your time and a very informative meeting.

Sincerely,

Julie Gibbons
Thank-You Sample #2: Thank you after an interview

August 11, 20__

Dear Mr. O’Neal:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview for the position available in your production department. I want you to know that this is the sort of job I have been looking for and I am enthusiastic about the possibility of working for you.

Now that we have spoken, I know that I have both the experience and skills to fit nicely into your organization and to be productive quickly. The procedure changes I implemented during my internship decreased the customer order turnaround time by 15%. I am confident I would bring this same kind of motivation and efficiency to M&R Techtronics.

Thanks again for the interview; I enjoyed the visit.

Sincerely,

Sara Smith

Sample #3: Thank you after an interview

December 10, 20__

Dear Mr. White:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to interview with you yesterday. It was great to finally meet you. I especially enjoyed our conversation about the various projects with which EXCEL is currently involved.

The position sounds like a very exciting and challenging opportunity for someone with my background. As we discussed, I have a special aptitude for web page design and editing, and am familiar with a variety of desktop publishing programs. The position is also a good fit because I enjoy working with others, but can also work very well independently when necessary.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share with you my desires and qualifications to become a technical editor for EXCEL. Please feel free to contact me at afrederick@otterbein.edu if you need additional information. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alicia Frederick
Sample # 4: Thank you after an interview, when a more casual response is appropriate

August 23, 20__

Dear Jennifer,

Thanks for taking time for my interview this week. It was fantastic to meet the team I’d work with and learn more about the alumni relations position. Thank you also for the nice compliment on my cover letter – I think we both know it is not an easy piece to write.

I know we’d be great partners if I were to get this job, because I am wholly committed to helping students with their growth and development through my involvement with the student groups for my professional association, PRSA. In uncertain times, students and alumni can form a strong network to combat the economic challenges and serve each other in new ways.

I hope we will get a chance to speak further about the ways I envision the college can continue to serve alumni, with a focus on personal relationships. Please let me know if you have any other questions about my background. I’d be thrilled to get this position and serve others with innovation, passion and dedication.

Sincerely,

Catherine Wright

Sample #4: Thank you for an informational interview

October 23, 20__

Dear Ms. Concord:

Thank you for sharing your time with me so generously yesterday. I really appreciated talking to you about your career field. The information you shared with me increased my desire to work in such an area. Your advice has already proven helpful---I have an appointment to meet with Robert Harper on Friday.

In case you think of another person who might need a person like me, I’m enclosing another resume.

Sincerely,

Debbie Childs
Letter of Inquiry about Search Status: E-Mail format

SUBJECT: Inquiry about search status: Joan Wheeler

Dear Mr. White:

As I had stated at our interview on January 7th, I am very interested in securing employment with your organization. I was initially very impressed with your company’s web site, and felt even more confident after our meeting that EXCEL is where I want to work.

Would you kindly advise me of the status of your search for the entry-level communication specialist? If you need further information, you may call me between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. at 564-1276. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Joan Wheeler

Letter Accepting an Offer

June 6, 20__

Mr. Thomas Manfred
Ross Products Division, Department 321789-CP
585 Cleveland Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Mr. Manfred:

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to work with Ross Products Division. I am very pleased to accept the position as Assistant Chemist with your Columbus office. The position involves the kind of work I want to do and I know I will do a good job for you.

As we discussed, I shall begin work on June 23, 20___. In the meantime, I shall complete all the necessary employment forms and obtain the required physical exam. Since I will be in Columbus within the next two weeks, I will deliver the paperwork to you personally. At that time, we can handle any remaining items pertaining to my employment.

You are giving me an exceptional learning opportunity and I look forward to making a contribution at Ross Products Division. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

John Huang
Letter Declining an Offer

June 15, 20__

Mr. John McMohan  
Huntington National Bank  
One Huntington Plaza  
Dayton, Ohio  45432

Dear Mr. McMohan:

Thank you so much for your support of my candidacy for a position with MGI. Your willingness to share information about the firm, about the field, and about the functions served by the public relations specialist is very much appreciated.

It is with mixed feelings that I inform you that I have accepted a position with PGM. Inc. This organization offered me the opportunity to work as an assistant in the media relations department, a special interest area of mine. In addition, the starting date of June 15 will allow me to begin working immediately upon graduation, a factor that was important in my decision. I greatly appreciate your consideration and your faith in my abilities.

Sincerely,  

William Hollis