

Professional Letters

Basic Cover/Application Letter Principles

Layout/Appearance

- Always type your letters using a professional font for headings and body text consistent with your resume.
- Adhere to block style format for business correspondence (double-space between paragraphs; text flush to the left).
- Use the contact's title such as Mr., Ms., or Dr. (always use Ms. instead of Miss or Mrs.).
- Make sure your letter is free of typos, misspellings and grammatical errors.
- Sign your letter at the bottom of the page in blue or black ink or leave space blank if sent electronically.
- Print your letter on quality paper to match your resume.
- Letters should be one page.

Writing Style

- Avoid beginning all sentences with "I". Place a greater emphasis on the word "you".
- Avoid the phrase "I am writing" in your opening paragraph, as this is understood in a letter.
- Lengthy paragraphs are overwhelming to read. Divide your text into several paragraphs, each one describing different aspects of your education and work experience.
- Use transition phrases and topic sentences to improve the flow of the letter between paragraphs.
- Your letter should always convey confidence and a positive attitude; eliminate statements of doubt. For instance, statements like, "If you think I am qualified", or "I hope you find my..." will not assure the reader that you are a confident individual.
- Provide specific examples to illustrate how your qualifications meet the organization's needs.

Overall Impression/Marketing Effectiveness of Content

- Address your letter to a specific person and double check the spelling of the individual's name. If the job posting did not indicate a name, you may need to call the company to obtain this information. If there is no phone number listed to call the company, you should address the letter to "Hiring Manager" or "Human Resource Representative".
- Tailor all your materials to the position and company, emphasizing how your specific qualifications match the employer's needs as described in the position description.
- All of the items cited in your cover letter should also appear on your resume.
- Use factual statements regarding an organization to demonstrate your research.
- Convey self-confidence in abilities without being overly aggressive.
- Do not oversell yourself or appear too desperate.
- Follow through on any action stated in your letter, such as a phone call to the employer. Maintain a contact log to aid you with following-up in a timely fashion.
- Carefully read the company's instructions for submitting your application materials. If you are unsure how to send your materials, note in your email you have sent them in multiple formats for them to open as they prefer. Microsoft Word or .pdf formats are preferred, but .text embedded in the email is an acceptable alternative.

Professional Email Etiquette

- Address people you do not know as Mr., Ms., or Dr., only address someone by first name if they imply it is okay.
- In the subject line, make it obvious why you are writing: "Application for XYZ position."
- Name your document "your name, resume." Employers receive hundreds of resumes via email and will not have to look through 300 attachments called "resume" to locate yours.
- Never use all capital letters. Employers may think that you are screaming and it can be difficult to read.
- Do not assume that if an employer is informal (using slang, emoticons, etc.) that you should be.
- Wait to fill in the "TO" Email Address. This will keep you from accidentally sending an email prematurely. It is easy to accidentally click the send icon, when you really meant to click on the attachment icon.

Submitting an Application through Email

Your email can be a brief introduction:

To: xyzperson@abccompany.org
From: jane.student@my.uwrf.edu
Subject: XYZ Job Application

Dear Ms. Clark:

This email is in response to the advertisement posted on the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Hire-a-Falcon vacancy list for a XYZ position at ABC company (Job Posting #123). Please accept the attached letter and resume as my application for this position. My skills and experience closely fit the posted job description and I believe I am an excellent fit for this position. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,

Jane Student
(715) 425-5555
jane.student@my.uwrf.edu

Or your email can be your cover letter:

To: xyzperson@abccompany.org
From: jane.student@my.uwrf.edu
Subject: XYZ Job Application

Dear Ms. Clark:

This email is in response to the advertisement posted on the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF) Hire-a-Falcon vacancy list for XYZ position at ABC Company (Job #123). Please accept the attached resume as an application for this position. As a leader in green business operations, I was drawn to your company and the services you provide your community. Contributing to a company that provides services to its community in an eco-friendly way is a goal of mine. Due to my experience in the industry, and my passion for contributing to your mission of eco-friendly operations, I feel I am an ideal candidate for this position.

You are seeking a candidate who is knowledgeable and experienced in the banking industry, while also able to work cooperatively with diverse populations. As a Business Administration student at UWRF, I have taken advantage of numerous internship opportunities to gain relevant banking and customer service experience. For the past two years, I have worked as a Bank Teller at Wells Fargo, where I was responsible for serving customers, balancing my drawer and mentoring new tellers. In addition, I have served as the treasurer of the UWRF Business Association for the past two years, studied abroad in Scotland, and completed a financial management internship this summer, allowing me to work with many people from different backgrounds. These experiences helped enhance my leadership, teamwork, customer service and time-management skills, which will be beneficial at ABC company.

The opportunity to become a contributing member of ABC Company, and continuing the tradition of friendly and accurate service excites me. A meeting to learn more about your needs and how I can contribute would be greatly appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jane Student
(715) 426-4444
jane.student@my.uwrf.edu

Professional Letter Format

Professional letters allow you to introduce yourself and highlight unique experiences in depth to make you stand out. This letter not only allows the employer to gain a better understanding of your skills, interest and qualifications, it also conveys your written communication skills and abilities. Below is an outline that will help you format your professional letter.

Jordan Gaetz

123 South 7th Street, River Falls, WI 54022, 555-123-4567, jordan.gaetz@my.uwrf.edu

Date

Employer's Name, Title
Company/Organization Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. ____:

Opening Paragraph:

Why are you writing this letter? What position are you applying for? What is your interest in the company and position?

Introduce yourself and state the position in which you are applying for. Personalize each letter by showing interest in the company/organization. Research the company/organization to show interest and relate this to your background and experiences. Keep this focused on qualifications you can bring to the employer, not what the employer can do for you.

Second Paragraph(s):

What are your qualifications? Why are you the right person for this position? Peak the employer's interest so he/she will want to read your resume and schedule an interview.

Sell yourself. Give the employer a reason to read your resume by explaining specifics about your skills or experiences. Highlight experiences that relate to the position you are applying for. Continue to tie your knowledge of the company, position, industry or field into your examples. Utilize the position description to tailor this section of the letter to each position.

Final Paragraph:

Re-state your interest. Do you have a follow-up plan?

Close your letter by re-stating your interest and thank the employer for their consideration. State that you would like to discuss further employment opportunities and that you could supply more information if needed.

Sincerely,

(Sign Here)

Your Name Typed Here

Example of Tailoring a Cover Letter to a Position Description

Job Description: The Community Volunteer Coordinator position at the Refugee and Immigrant Family Center includes the oversight of programs, which have as their goal the recruitment, and placement of volunteers in the city of Seattle. The Coordinator will develop a volunteer team who will respond to the identified needs of Immigrants and Refugees and will be responsible for the recruitment, training, placement and tracking of all volunteers involved in this effort. The Coordinator will also recruit and refer volunteers, recognize and promote volunteerism, and maintain records. **Qualifications:** BS/BA and experience in human service; experience in volunteer program management, public speaking, and strong interpersonal skills; Ability to work independently to bring a project to completion and skills in facilitating partnerships, developing collaborative projects, prioritizing and managing multiple tasks; Experience working with Excel, Word and data reporting.

Cameron Larson

198 Sylla Drive ♦ Eau Claire, WI 54701 ♦ (715) 555-4567 ♦ cameron.larson@gmail.com

October 24, 2011

Mr. Scott Johnson, President
Refugee and Immigrant Family Center
1300 Dexter Avenue
Seattle, WA 98109-3542

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Please accept this letter and resume for the position of Community Volunteer Coordinator at the Refugee and Immigrant Family Center in the Seattle, WA location. Lucy Smith, a Child Welfare Worker in your office, informed me about this position. Advocating for individual's rights is a passion of mine, and I plan to bring this to your organization if hired. I hope to contribute to your mission to "Promote fairness, equity and respect" for refugees and immigrants. From my educational background and experiences, you will see my values and skills match closely with your organizational strengths of providing diversity and self-reliance.

Your position requires skills and knowledge of volunteer program management. During the pursuit of my Bachelor of Social Work degree from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, I worked as an Advocate at Turningpoint for three years. As an Advocate, I was responsible for managing the volunteer program that included training and supervising 60+ volunteers annually. Additionally, while assisting with the client intake process, I organized paperwork, answered questions, consoled clients, and directed clients to community resources. Developing relationships with volunteers is a skill I have developed the last few years and has made me realize volunteers are invaluable to non-profit organization successes.

In my past position as a Peer Advisor in the UWRF Career Services office, I worked one-on-one with 100+ clients, which enhanced my interpersonal communication skills. During each appointment, I worked to establish rapport by asking questions to learn more about their goals and career plans. This laid a strong foundation of trust and ensured high quality customer service was provided. I also facilitated 13 career related workshops, which demonstrates my strong public speaking abilities. Good communication skills are imperative when working with volunteers and can help build lasting relationships for the organization.

I have a passion to work for an organization, such as yours, that provides relevant services to assist and empower refugees, immigrants and low-income families. The opportunity to interview with you would be appreciated. Please feel free to contact me at cameron.larson@gmail.com or at (715) 555-4567. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cameron Larson (this should be an actual signature)

Cameron Larson

Georgina Starbuck

555 Wabasha Street North ■ Saint Paul, MN 55102 ■ (555) 228-4723 ■ georgina.starbuck@my.uwrf.edu

December 5, 2012

Mr. Brian Shrack, Executive Coordinator
ABC Corporation
555 North Farwell Street
Eau Claire, WI 54702

Dear Mr. Shrack:

Please accept this cover letter and resume as application for the ABC Corporation's marketing coordinator position. Emily Conrad notified me of the open position and I am excited for the opportunity to learn more about your organization. As a job search specialist at the EFG recruiting company, my goal is to assist individuals with career exploration. I believe there is a strong parallel between this goal and ABC's mission of facilitating the growth of job opportunities in the Eau Claire Area. This is a mission I am eager to contribute to. You are seeking a marketing coordinator with well-rounded marketing experiences and skill sets. Through my professional experiences, I have had the opportunity to organize and implement marketing campaigns, supervise student interns, and manage Web sites and online databases.

In each of my event coordination experiences, I have been responsible for coordinating marketing plans and ensuring all event details were completed. Utilizing Adobe Creative Suite and web design programs, I have created promotional materials for Web sites, newspapers and local publications. I have also written and distributed press releases and event invitations, as well as participated in newspaper, radio and campus television interviews. Managing and implementing all aspects of marketing is a true passion of mine and I am excited for new challenges with the ABC Corporation.

The ABC's marketing coordinator is responsible for supervising interns. This is an area of overlap with my current position. I currently supervise two student interns. The Event Planning intern coordinates all aspects of a large community event and I ensure the details and logistics of the marketing campaign are appropriate. We meet bi-weekly, tracking the intern's progress, planning future priorities and tackling any urgent tasks that arise. The employer intern is responsible for all communications regarding company visits. This intern meets with me periodically throughout the month to update our processes and materials. Supervising interns is something I enjoy because of the excitement they bring to each project as well as their dedication to produce high quality work.

As the employer relations specialist, I manage a database system allowing employers to connect with qualified candidates for open positions. We utilize this online system for candidates to upload resumes for searches by employers as well as sign up for on-campus interviews. I manage the details behind the scenes with the employer, set up the interview logistics and promote the opportunity to students. Based on your Web site, it seems this system is strikingly similar to the ABC's Recruitment Network.

I am very excited to apply for this position because I believe I am a strong candidate and am eager to utilize my marketing and organization skills to help the ABC Corporation achieve its goals. I look forward to speaking with you personally about my qualifications. You may reach me at (555) 228-4723 or georgina.starbuck@my.uwrf.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Georgina Starbuck (this should be an actual signature)

Georgina Starbuck

Rachel Jones

1009 Johnson Street, River Falls, WI 54022
(715) 425-2222, rachel.jones@my.uwrf.edu

February 12, 2011

Mr. Robin Erb
Human Resources
Chicago Botanic Garden
1000 Lake Cook Road
Glencoe, IL 60022

Dear Mr. Erb:

Please consider this letter and enclosed resume as my application for the Horticulturist position, available in the Japanese and Waterfall gardens at the Chicago Botanical Garden. I was referred to this position by Dr. Olsen, horticulture professor at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. After researching your organization, I discovered your commitment for operating with extremely high ethical standards with both your employees and customers. With a Bachelor's degree in Horticulture and internship experience at St. Croix Gardens, I have learned how important this is for a company to support its employees and provide the best services possible. I am confident that I am a great fit for this position due to both my qualifications and the parallel between your ethical standards of operating.

You will find me to be a key asset at the Chicago Botanical Garden due to my excellent communication skills and creativeness, which compliments my knowledge of plant care and excellent communication skills. My experiences, credentials, and values closely meet the collections, education, and research components you include as the basis of your mission.

Your Requirements

- Maintain Japanese and Waterfall gardens
- Design garden displays
- Writing articles, leading tours, providing updates to customers and staff; excellent communication skills-written and verbal
- Computer literacy

My Qualifications

- Cared for ornamental plants as a Nursery Assistant Intern and updated beds to provide a more aesthetic look and feel
- Designed all components of landscaping and nursery lots to improve visibility of plants
- Discussed maintenance with lot owners to ensure proper care of plants; also, supervised 30 employees of diverse backgrounds and tutored multiple students on a variety of horticulture topics
- Proficient in DesignCad, Plant Elements of Design, CompuPlants, and Idea Spectrum Landscape Design Software

The opportunity to discuss my qualifications and learn more about your needs would be welcomed. You may reach me at (715) 425-2222 or by email at rachel.jones@my.uwrf.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rachel Jones (this should be an actual signature)

Rachel Jones

Thank You Letter Example

KYLE HERZOG

◆ 654 Johnson Street ◆ River Falls, WI 54022 ◆ (715) 555-1212 ◆ kyle.herzog@gmail.com ◆

September 15, 2012

Mr. Kevin Smith
Marketing Director
Carmichael Lynch
110 North 5th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you very much for interviewing me yesterday for the Marketing Assistant position at Carmichael Lynch. I enjoyed meeting with you to learn more about the position and would like to reiterate my interest and enthusiasm.

I was very encouraged to learn my qualifications matched so well with your requirements. The creative approach to marketing you desire heightened my interest in the position. My Marketing Promotion Internship with Clear Channel Communications has given me the opportunity to put my creativity to work by implementing poster advertisements, creating direct mail publications, and experimenting with additional methods of gaining consumer attention. These experiences will be very beneficial when working with Carmichael Lynch.

One highlight I did not mention during my interview was the three years of marketing experience I had with UW-River Falls as a Marketing Intern in Career Services. You may find samples of my work from this position at www.mywebspace.com/uwrfcareerintern.

I look forward to the opportunity to become a positive force within the Marketing Department at Carmichael Lynch. If you would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at kyle.herzog@gmail.com or at (715) 555-1212.

Sincerely,

Kyle Herzog (this should be an actual signature)

Kyle Herzog

First Paragraph

It is important to personalize each thank you note to the specific individual. Express thanks and appreciation for the interview, and the consideration extended to you. State the job for which you were interviewed, as well as the date and location of the interview

Second Paragraph (Use one or all of the following approaches)

- 1) Re-affirm your interest in the position and company.
- 2) Re-emphasize your strongest qualifications.
- 3) Re-address items/questions from the interview. If there was a question that caused confusion, it is appropriate to restate your answer.
- 4) Draw attention to the good match between your qualifications and the job requirements.

Third Paragraph

Show willingness to provide any additional clarifying data or statements and submit any further information you may want to add to your application.