

COVER LETTER WRITING

Why write a cover letter?

Writing a cover letter increases the value of your resume to the prospective employer. A well-written cover letter introduces your resume and motivates the employer to read it with greater interest and attention. The cover letter should be utilized as a tool to link yourself to the employer and demonstrate your writing skills.

Do employers really read cover letters?

Yes! The real question isn't *if* but *when* do employers read cover letters? Think about how you sort through a stack of information. First, you'd probably skim the resume and first paragraph of the cover letter to sort candidates into 'yes', 'no' and 'maybe' piles. The second time through, you'd read everything closely to whittle down your 'yes' pile to 3-5 strong candidates to invite to interview.

Will a cover letter really make a difference?

Yes, because it makes your argument about how you can contribute to their organization. Those without cover letters have to hope that the employer can figure that out. A cover letter proves that you know what you have to offer and that you can communicate it!

Cover Letter Tips:

- Your cover letter should highlight your **strengths**. Think of your cover letter as a tool for explaining to the employer that the strengths you possess make you an ideal candidate for the position.
- These strengths should match what the employer is looking for.
- Add examples from your resume to support the strengths discussed in the cover letter.
- 'Make sure it is well written and meaningful: employers will use a cover letter to measure your writing ability.
- Include the heading from your resume for a uniform look.
- Address the letter to a specific person. If you don't know their name, call the company and ask for it (be sure you get the correct spelling and gender). If no one can provide it for you, address your letter as "Dear Title" (i.e. "Dear Director of Marketing" or "Dear Finance Manager").
- Tailor each cover letter to each company: demonstrate to the employer why you want to work specifically for them.
- Back up every statement with concrete evidence.
- Keep it simple and to the point-1 page only!
- Use language that conveys confidence, eagerness, optimism and energy.

Lea Leopard

1950 Third Street, La Verne, CA 91750

Email: lleopard@laverne.edu • Phone: (909) 555-5555

January 1, 2015

Ms. Samantha Smith, Intern Coordinator
Nordstrom
555 Nordstrom Way
Los Angeles, CA 90000

Dear Ms. Smith,

I am writing to express my interest in the M.B.A. Internship position posted on the Nordstrom Careers website. As Master's in Business Administration major with a concentration in Marketing, I offer strong communication and social media marketing skills, as well as knowledge of professional business practices.

I have a strong passion for the fashion industry as evidenced by my more than three years working with clothing and accessory retailers. Throughout my time as a sales associate with Nordstrom, I have developed my ability to communicate effectively with diverse customers as they search for something new, as well as with team members in order to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. In addition, I am active with social media, including frequent use of Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest, among others. I also have my own fashion/food blog, which has over 100 followers.

My coursework at the University of La Verne has provided me with a strong foundation of professional business and marketing practices. Areas of strength include my ability to analyze market trends and consumer behavior and develop professional business and marketing plans. One of the projects I have led included meeting with a professional marketing team from a large clothing retailer and creating a complete strategic plan based on the information given and subsequent research conducted.

My experience as a Nordstrom team member, along with my educational background makes me an ideal candidate for this M.B.A. Internship position. I look forward to discussing my qualifications further. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lea Leopard

Leo Leopard

1950 Third Street, La Verne, CA 91750

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January 1, 2015

La Verne Physical Therapy
555 Leo Way
La Verne, CA 90000

Dear Hiring Manager,

Please accept my résumé for the Physical Therapy Aide position listed on the University of La Verne's Career Link. The skills, qualities, and determination I possess, along with my passion for helping others overcome physical and mental challenges make me an ideal fit for this position and your organization. The following are examples of key strengths that will aid me in succeeding in this position:

- **Knowledge of Anatomy & Physiology** – As a Kinesiology major, my coursework at the University of La Verne, combined with my experience with trainers and doctors as a student athlete, have provided me with the necessary knowledge of the human body to perform as a Physical Therapy Aide.
- **Excellent Communication Skills** – My previous experience in retail sales allowed me to develop my communication skills with clients and colleagues. In addition, my fluency in Spanish has served to aid in my communications in professional, educational, and community settings.
- **Ability to Multitask** – During my time as a student at the University of La Verne, I have successfully balanced my classwork, responsibilities as a student athlete, volunteer work in the community, and working during breaks in sessions.
- **Team Skills** – As a student athlete, I have been elected to various leadership positions for my teams, including twice being selected as a team captain. My work as a volunteer coach for youth sports has contributed to my abilities to foster a team-oriented atmosphere from a position of leadership.

Working as a Physical Therapy Aide for La Verne Physical Therapy not only aligns with my long-term career goals, but also with my values as an organization which provides professional and courteous assistance to all clients. My background and skills will allow me to make direct and meaningful contributions to your organization.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon so that we may further discuss how my skills and abilities are aligned with the Physical Therapy Aide position.

Sincerely,

Leo Leopard

THANK YOU (AND OTHER) LETTERS

Thank You Letter

Dear Ms. Brown,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to interview with Miller Youth and Family Services. I am not only impressed by the comprehensive services you offer for your clients, but also by your staff's support of and commitment to each other as a team.

It was especially helpful to hear about your experience transitioning into the organization from a county department, as well as your take on the volunteers who work here. I have no doubt that your perspective will be invaluable for whomever you select as the new Mentor Program Manager.

I remain very interested in this position, and regardless of the outcome, I greatly appreciate your willingness to meet with me and share more about the work you do here. I hope that your interview process runs smoothly, and I look forward to hearing from you soon regarding your decision. Please let me know if you have any further questions regarding my experience, skills, and interest in the position.

Thank you,

Jane Smith

A. Thank you notes are 4-8 sentences long. Use this format as a reference. If your interview was conducted by a panel of interviewers each person should receive a separate letter.

1. (Same for everyone) Say thank you.
2. (Same for everyone) Tell them why you are thanking them or give your overall impression of the meeting.
3. (Unique to each person) Give a statement about something you specifically appreciated from your time with them.
4. (Same for everyone) Closing lines.

B. **Who should get a thank you letter?** Everyone you interviewed with should receive a thank you letter.

If someone takes the time to interview or share advice or resources (whether it's an employment or informational interview) it is considered professionally polite to acknowledge it. A thank you also sets you apart from other candidates

C. **Should I send my note by email or via the post office?**

If you know that the employer is making a decision in the next few days, send a short thank you email within 24 hours of your interview. Always follow up with a more personalized hand written note sent by post.

If you're not sure, you can ask. For example, at the end of the interview, you could ask the administrative assistant or whoever organized the day for the contact information of everyone you met. You can also ask their opinion. "I'd like to send brief thank you notes to Ms. Brown and Mr. Jones. Do you recommend email or a paper correspondence?"

D. **If I send paper correspondence, do I need to use cards that say 'thank you'?**

No. Simple 4x6" folding cards are excellent for brief, 4 sentence thank you notes. You do not have to use the ones with thank you stamped on them. You may also choose ones with the University of La Verne logo or your monogram (be sure they look professional). Handwrite them, for a more personal touch. However, be sure that you write legibly!

Acceptance Letter

May 30, 2011

Kristin Campbell
California Products Inc.
1432 Juniper Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Dear Ms. Campbell:

I am delighted to confirm my acceptance for the position of Lead Sales Manager in your Public Relations department at California Products Inc. I will be attending the 3-day training orientation and begin my employment on Monday, June 23rd.

In speaking with Ms. Smith, the human resources representative, I understand that California Products Inc. has an extensive healthcare and insurance benefits program as well as a 401(k) company match plan. As we agreed, my compensation will be \$65,000 annually and will provide for 3 weeks paid vacation leave each year.

I would like to once again express my appreciation for your offer and my excitement about joining your team. I look forward to my association with California Products Inc. and feel my contributions will be in line with your goals and continued success for the company.

Sincerely,

Lea Leopard

A. Acceptance Letter Dissected

1. **Enthusiastic Yes** - Demonstrate your excitement regarding your acceptance of the offer and include the title of the position.
2. **Terms of Agreement** - Clarify the terms as you negotiated and understand them (salary, start date, benefits, etc.).
3. **Thank you** - Thank the employer for the opportunity and reiterate your enthusiasm for beginning your new position.

Rejection/Decline Letters

May 31, 2011

Michael McDonald, Director
The Walt Disney Company
11414 East Rose St.
Anaheim, CA 928036

Dear Mr. McDonald:

It was a pleasure meeting with you and your staff to discuss your needs for an administrative assistant. Our time together was very informative and enjoyable.

I want to thank you for the offer you have made to join your team as an Administrative Assistant. After careful thought and consideration, I have decided to decline the position. My decision is primarily based on the fact that I recently accepted a position elsewhere that is well suited with my qualifications, experiences, and future goals.

I want to thank you for interviewing me and giving me the opportunity to learn more about your company and its projects. Best wishes to you and your staff.

Sincerely,

Mary Murphy

B. Rejection/Decline Letter Dissected

1. **Opening Paragraph** - Greet and thank the employer for offering the position to you.
2. **Your Decline** - Tell the employer that you are declining the position and convey your reasons.
3. **Closing** - Express your thanks again and end with a positive closing. Wish the employer well and luck in their search for a candidate.