BUSINESS STUDENTS’ GUIDE TO COVER LETTERS

Purpose:

- To serve as a business transmittal letter for your resume
- To introduce you and your employment credentials to the employer
- To generate employer interest in interviewing you

Employer Perspective:

- Hiring manager will give the cover letter a cursory glance and first concentrate on the resume. The resume details the specifics of the candidate’s background and qualifications and is compared to the manager’s specific requirements. If there is a match, the cover letter is looked at fully.
- When reading the cover letter, the employment manager will usually look to see if it is a generic cover letter or if it is specific/personal to the company. They may look closer at the ones who have a connection to that company (i.e. referral, networking event at college). Career services sponsors many employer related events (information sessions, career fairs) that you should be able to say something like, “I met you at the Job Jamboree at the University of Delaware in September and I walked away even more excited about your company and position”.
- The employer is looking for specific qualifications that match the industry and position. Be sure that you address the qualifications of the job description in the body of your cover letter. If they are looking for someone who is creative, has good communication and organizational skills, then you need to be sure that you address those skills in your cover letter.

Content of a Cover Letter:

Regardless of what type of cover letter you are writing, the basic format is the same. Use the formula below as a general guideline for all cover letters.

I. Opening paragraph
   - Expresses your interest in the organization and focuses on it
   - Tells where you heard about the organization or position
   - Demonstrates your knowledge of the organization or field

II. Body
   - Highlights a few major skill sets with examples to prove you possess that skill
   - Focuses on you
   - Illustrates how your qualifications match their needs

III. Closing
   - Summarizes how you would fit the organization
   - Requests action. Asks for an interview or an application
   - Suggests a date that you will call to follow up (be sure to follow up)

Additional Tips:

- Make an appointment with your career advisor to look over your cover letter.
- Make sure it is error proof (grammar, spelling, sentence structure)
- Be concise and use specific examples.
Bad Cover Letters:

A cover letter can be useless if it:

- Does not speak about the skills that are relevant to the position you are applying to.
- Is poorly written with weak sentence structure and poor grammar.
- Contains misspelled words or typographical errors.
- Is boring to read.
- Contains sexist, condescending or discriminatory statements.
- Fails to address the reader personally or focus on his/her needs.

Examples of Bad Cover Letters:

Dear Sirs:

Please consider this as my letter of application for the position of _____. I have a bachelor's degree in history and I have worked every summer as a painter for C & D Painting Company. I have enclosed a copy of my resume and will be glad to send a copy of my reference letters upon request. For personal reasons, however, I will respectfully request that you not contact C & D Painters.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

To Whom It May Concern:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the spring of hope, the winter of despair, we had everything before us...". This quote from Charles Dickens captures the essence of the business world today. We are presented with opportunities for growth and a lot of decisions need to be made which will affect all of our futures. To deal with these choices, help is often needed. This is why I would like to work for your company.

I have enclosed a copy of my resume which highlights my skills and experiences. I believe your management training position is the challenge and opportunity which I am looking for in my career. I am confident I would be an asset to your company. Your consideration of my resume would be greatly appreciated.

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am interested in applying for you management training program. I graduated from College USA with a degree in Economics. I have done a lot of public speaking and I have written many papers which demonstrate my strong communication skills. I am good at dealing with people and I am a hard worker.

I should like to be considered a candidate for management training position in your company. Though I have no previous working experience in a company such as yours or in the position advertised, my excellent organizational skills and enthusiasm will more than make up for my lack of experience. Enclosed please find a current resume.
**Job Skills Checklist:**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this skills inventory is to help you to be able to come up with different skills that you may be having a hard time thinking of yourself.

**How to use the Skills Inventory:** The following is a sample list of skills found in a cross section of careers. Circle every skill that applies to you. Jot down examples of situations in your working life that demonstrate this skill. Then try to incorporate these skills into your resume and/or cover letter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adminstering programs</th>
<th>planning agendas/meetings</th>
<th>setting up demonstrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>advising people</td>
<td>planning organizational needs</td>
<td>writing reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>analyzing data</td>
<td>predicting futures</td>
<td>writing for publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>auditing financial reports</td>
<td>organizing tasks</td>
<td>checking for accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budgeting expenses</td>
<td>prioritzing work</td>
<td>classifying records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calculating numerical data</td>
<td>creating new ideas</td>
<td>coaching individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finding information</td>
<td>meeting people</td>
<td>collecting money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handling complaints</td>
<td>evaluating programs</td>
<td>compiling statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handling detail work</td>
<td>editing work</td>
<td>inventing new ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imagining new solutions</td>
<td>coping with deadlines</td>
<td>proposing ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negotiating/arbitrating conflicts</td>
<td>promoting events</td>
<td>dramatizing ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speaking to the public</td>
<td>raising funds</td>
<td>estimating physical space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing letters/papers/proposals</td>
<td>questioning others</td>
<td>organizing files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading volumes of material</td>
<td>being thorough</td>
<td>selling products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listening to others</td>
<td>running meetings</td>
<td>teaching/instructing/training individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relating to the public</td>
<td>supervising employees</td>
<td>delegating responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entertaining people</td>
<td>enduring long hours</td>
<td>persuading others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deciding uses of money</td>
<td>displaying artistic ideas</td>
<td>summarizing information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>counseling/consulting people</td>
<td>managing an organization</td>
<td>comparing results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operating equipment</td>
<td>motivating others</td>
<td>comprehending ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>determining a problem</td>
<td>reporting information</td>
<td>generating accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaborating ideas</td>
<td>defining a problem</td>
<td>making decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overseeing operations</td>
<td>administering medication</td>
<td>selling ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching/instructing/training individuals</td>
<td>motivating others</td>
<td>conducting interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>analyzing problems</td>
<td>thinking in a logical manner</td>
<td>setting priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preparing written communications</td>
<td>recommending courses of action</td>
<td>gathering information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>setting work/committee goals</td>
<td>expressing ideas orally to individuals or groups</td>
<td>providing discipline when necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taking personal responsibility</td>
<td>conducting meetings</td>
<td>meeting new people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maintaining a high level of activity</td>
<td>developing plans for projects</td>
<td>picking out important information</td>
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<tr>
<td>developing a climate of enthusiasm, teamwork, and cooperation</td>
<td>thinking of creative ideas</td>
<td>enforcing rules and regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interacting with people at different levels</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Dear Ms. Kelly:

I was given your name by Michelle Geller, a marketing professor at the University of Delaware, who told me about the Marketing Associate position with ABC Consulting. As the third largest consulting firm in the industry and on Fortune's top 100 places to launch a career in 2014, ABC Consulting can offer me opportunities that far surpass those I would be given at a smaller company. I feel my experiences and education make me an ideal candidate for this position.

As a senior, marketing major with additional coursework in finance and economics, I feel my academic background fits well with the nature of your work. I was an active leader in many of my upper level business projects and took advantage of every opportunity to learn about international markets. This past summer I interned at Morgan Stanley and was exposed to many areas of client services. This experience enabled me to understand marketing and consulting strategies as well as being a contributing member of some major team projects. These experiences, in and out the classroom, have solidified my interest in an organization like ABC Consulting.

My resume demonstrates a high level of involvement outside the classroom at University of Delaware. I have been an active participant and have taken on leadership in many of my volunteer activities. Leading a major fund raising campaign for my fraternity and being a committee leader for Special Olympics have been highlights for me. My involvements at the University of Delaware, as well as holding a part-time position throughout college convey a strong work ethic and boundless energy. After graduation, I would like to continue my strong performance with ABC Consulting.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my candidacy in more detail. Please contact me by phone or email if you need any additional information.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Matthew Marketing
Enclosure
December 1, 2014

Ms. Alison Parse  
Tipton Communications  
220 Continental Drive  
Suite 20  
Newark, DE 19700

Dear Ms. Parse:

I am formally applying for the Spring Public Relations Intern position with Tipton Communications. I discovered the position posted on the University of Delaware’s Blue Hen Careers database. Tipton Communications is a company in which I can produce results because I identify with the company’s passionate strategy of doing whatever it takes to succeed. Whether it is to perfect employee communication, or master publications and graphic design, I am more than capable of helping the company stay true to its mission.

As a senior, marketing major, I feel my educational background and experiences combine for a good fit for Tipton. I took on many leadership positions in group projects throughout my upper level marketing courses. This past November, I attended the 53rd Annual Advertising Career Conference in New York City hosted by the AWNY and was exposed to insight from top industry figureheads on the industry and its direction. During the summer of 2013, I interned at MTV Networks/Viacom in the Digital Ad Sales department, in which I researched sellable opportunities, maintained information on corporate accounts, and networked with countless professionals. These experiences have combined to validate my true interest in the industry and in an organization like Tipton Communications.

I have been active in many extracurricular activities at the University of Delaware, as indicated by my resume. Leading an online magazine at the university and taking control of its promotional operations has been a very rewarding experience for me. I have also taken part in an endeavor called B.L.U.E. Advertising in which we act as our own advertising and consulting firm for on-campus organizations. My high involvement at school and my incredible experiences in the industry have made me a determined and focused worker who will work hard for success.

I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my candidacy for this position in greater detail. Please contact my phone or email if you need any additional information. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Collin Advertising  
Enclosure
November 29, 2014

Strategic Diagnostics
11 Pencader Drive
Newark, DE 19702

To Whom It May Concern:

I am excited at the opportunity to work for a company with a focus on innovation such as Strategic Diagnostics. Your goal of providing new products and services to effectively solve customers’ current and future analytical problems is something I admire. Additionally, your ability to use the technical expertise of your staff in a variety of markets shows the versatility of your methods. Moreover, your strong position in the market and the contributions you make toward the success of your customers is commendable.

Classes taken during my undergraduate studies such as Analysis of Operations Problems and Quality Control, have given me a better understanding of the analysis necessary in improving business processes and products. Through the study of Six Sigma, Lean productions, Simulations, and Dynamic Programming, I have developed a basic knowledge of the techniques used in analyzing problems faced by businesses. I was able to apply those skills and gained a global perspective during my time studying abroad in Australia, New Zealand, and Hong Kong. It was enlightening to notice how a slight change in environment altered the business procedures of the various companies I analyzed.

My leadership roles in various clubs while at the University of Delaware have helped to provide me with the communication and management skills required to successfully work with others in a team environment. As President of Silver Wings, a volunteer organization, I was responsible for organizing and running meetings as well as working with the other officers to develop and execute charity events throughout the year.

I am eager to apply the skills and experience that I have acquired both in and out of the classroom and to grow as a professional with Strategic Diagnostics. I have included my resume and look forward to exploring career opportunities with you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brianna Business
October 5, 2013

Ms. Sue Knit
Grant Thornton
201 Market Street, Suite 31
Philadelphia PA, 19101

Dear Ms. Knit,

I am a junior, currently attending the University of Delaware, interested in interviewing for a summer internship within the Grant Thornton Audit Services. I have always been interested in accounting, and I think working within the Auditing Services Department of a highly respected firm would be a stimulating experience. I became extremely interested in Grant Thornton and the possibility of summer internships, after I attended a “Meet the Firms” event at my University. After a discussion with Brandon Smith about your company’s size, environment, and internship experience I knew that Grant Thornton would be a great fit for me. I would love the opportunity to learn and contribute to your company.

I began my studies at the University of Delaware as a computer engineer. Combining the difficult curriculum with an illness in the family, my GPA suffered. Since switching over to the business program, my GPA has continued to improve and will continue to improve. My recent GPA of a 3.0 is a much better reflection of my work ethic.

In attending the University of Delaware, I have been able to continue acquiring different skills that would allow me to be an asset to your company. My accounting classes have allowed me to gain a greater appreciation for the work and efforts that coincide with auditing and financial statements. I am a hard working individual and I take pride in what I perform. I am the Retreat Coordinator for my fraternity, where I get to plan brotherhood events for nearly 100 members. Planning and coordinating weekend-long events for such a large group requires organization and time management, which are both skills I possess. I also am the CAP Chair for my fraternity, in which I manage and communicate events for fraternity members for campus activities that involve diversity, career development, volunteer work, safety, and responsibility around the University. Afterwards I document and present our fraternity’s participation to our college administration to be recognized in an award system.

I have previously interned for an injection molding company that designed molds for different companies to go into their assembly lines. I was able to get a good idea of how a business operates and how to maintain a high level of professionalism in the office. Working as a lifeguard for the past three years has improved my awareness, responsibility, and preparedness. As a lifeguard one must be personable since there is constant communication with many different types of people.

I am looking forward to the opportunity of a personal interview within Grant Thornton. Please feel free to contact me at 555.555.3226 should you have any questions regarding my qualifications. I truly believe that I will be a great fit in Grant Thornton. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Manuel Audit
February 28, 2014

Deloitte Consulting LLP,  
1700 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  

Dear HR Hiring Manager,

Earlier this month I had the pleasure of meeting with one of your employees at a Coffee Chat held at the University of Delaware. During that discussion I learned about, and gained a strong interest in the Deloitte Federal Business Technology Summer Scholar Internship in Arlington Virginia. Currently, I am a junior year at the University of Delaware where I am simultaneously earning my B.A, and M.A. degrees in Economics. Despite the demands of pursuing a dual degree, I will graduate on time with my class in May of 2015. In addition to a record of high academic achievement, I have also demonstrated strong leadership and teaming skills in my numerous extra-curricular activities and in my work history that includes a summer internship at Filter Magazine in New York City, several food service jobs, and being a tutor for the UDEL Office of Academic Enrichment. Regardless of the endeavor, I have a strong affinity, and even a passion for problem solving. I believe it is that inherent personal characteristic, combined with my academic preparation and leadership experiences, which makes me a strong candidate for this internship and ultimately, a career in consulting.

For me, there is a strong relationship between leadership and problem solving. I frequently find myself drawn into leadership roles because peers look to me to solve issues that the organization or group is facing. This is the case with my sorority that was newly chartered last year. As a Greek organization, we were expected to participate in campus activities and events in which none of the members had any experience. To start the organization off on the right foot, I accepted the Chair roles for both our Spring 2013 Air Band benefit performance and the Fall 2013 Homecoming Week. Both endeavors were enormously complicated and time-consuming, and required extensive planning, consensus building, and great attention to detail in their execution. I take great pride in knowing that each event was a major success and reflected positively on the entire sorority of 170 women. As with the leadership roles that I have chosen for their blend of challenge and personal interest, I chose Economics as a course of study for similar reasons. Its blend of social science and quantitative analytics appeals to me because it allows for a rich understanding of underlying factors as well as proven methodologies for solving problems. I believe this set of skills and mindset would be valuable to a team of consultants attempting to solve their clients’ problems.

Again, I am highly interested in pursuing this internship with Deloitte Consulting not only because it is a leader in its field with a broad range of consulting career opportunities, but also because it is a company on the Best 100 Companies to Work for list. I am very impressed with the standards that your company maintains and would be proud to be associated with it.

I have enclosed my resume and transcript for your review and consideration. I thank you for your time and hope to hear that I will have the opportunity to meet in person.

Sincerely,

Leah Robinson

Enclosure: Resume and Transcript