

Weston Career Center



Washington University in St. Louis
OLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL

GUIDELINES

MBA Cover and
Thank You Letter

Prepared by the WCC Olin Business School
Washington University in St. Louis

MBA Cover and Thank You Letter Guidelines

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

- The Five Reasons Why You Write a Targeted Cover Letter
- The Four Steps to Write Your Targeted Cover Letter
- Content and Format: Component Parts
- Sample Letters
- Thank You Notes
- Thank You Note Sample Text
- Formatting Emails
- MBA Cover Letter Review Criteria

The Five Reasons Why You Write a Targeted Cover Letter

1. It is a mini-interview on paper.
2. It is your opportunity to make a good impression with the employer and make it to the next round.
3. It generates interest in your application by highlighting your suitability for and interest in the position.
4. It is an opportunity to showcase skills and accomplishments not included on your resume.
5. Employers may use the letter to assess your communication skills.



The Four Steps to Write Your Targeted Cover Letter

Step 1: Analyze the position and the company

- Underline key words or phrases in the job description that offer clues as to what the employer wants or requires
- Identify why you are interested in the position and company
- Identify the recruiter or hiring manager for the position
- Identify any contacts you have within the organization

Step 2: Compare your credentials with the position

- List at least three key accomplishments or experiences relevant to the position
- Identify transferable skills that make you an ideal candidate
- Communication skills
 - Teamwork and interpersonal skills
 - Leadership skills
 - Work ethic traits (self-motivation, initiative, ambition, reliability, drive, stamina)
 - Logic, intelligence, proficiency in study

Step 3: Write the letter

- Use the cover letter template and checklist on the website
- The letter should answer the following questions:
 - Why are you interested in the position and company?
 - How are you qualified for the position?
 - Why should you be hired over other candidates?

Step 4: Proofread and review

- Complete the self-review using the cover letter checklist
- Have a career advisor and a friend review your letter

Content and Format: Component Parts

Your Return Address

Date

Name of Contact Person

Title

Organization

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Salutation (Dear XXX):

Opening Paragraph: **STATE YOUR REASON FOR WRITING** - Introduction of yourself and the purpose of your letter: who you are and why you are writing. State what position you are applying for and why. Briefly mention how you learned of this opportunity or how the employer's name was obtained and state what you know about the company/position that intrigues you. Explain why you are an ideal candidate and interested in this particular company. (Use the company's specific name).

Middle Paragraph: **EMPHASIZE YOUR STRONGEST QUALIFICATIONS – BASED ON THEIR NEEDS** - An overview of your competencies (talents, knowledge, and skills) and unique strengths, stated in terms of the unique value you bring to the company. Support what you say by noting the positive results you achieved in internships, previous work, or educational contexts. Map your competencies to the requirements/needs of the specific job of interest or organization. Sell yourself.

Closing Paragraph: **STATE EXPECTED ACTION** - Thank the reader of your letter, state how you may be contacted (include both phone number and email address), and note what you will do to follow-up. Remember to state when you will be calling (approximately one week after you send the letter).

Sincerely,

Your signature (4 blank lines for this)

Your typed name

Enclosure: Résumé

Sample Letters

14 East Spring Street
Moneybury, CT 06903

Today's Date

Mr. Thom Flanton
Hiring Manager
Mock and Biddle
40 Wall Street
New York, NY 10001

Dear Mr. Flanton:

I will be graduating in May 20-- from the Olin Business School at Washington University in St. Louis with a Masters in Business Administration, majoring in finance and accounting, and I am seeking a full-time position in the Investment Banking field. I am extremely interested in beginning my career at Mock and Biddle. The investing history of Mock and Biddle, especially its stability during the 1980's junk bond and LBO craze, was the subject of my undergraduate group project. Mock and Biddle's commitment to the professional growth of its employees and team oriented environment are also appealing to me.

Mock and Biddle is my first choice for my entry into investment banking and I believe that my employment would be highly beneficial to Mock and Biddle, as well. I feel I have much to offer in Mock's drive to involve a younger generation of investors. As the founder of the Washington University Students Investment Group, I managed the capital of 31 of my peers, making a 9% annual return over a three-year period, and raising the amount of capital from an initial \$8,000 to \$54,000 within one year, while maintaining a 3.8 GPA. I want to apply that vision and multitasking ability at Mock and Biddle.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I look forward to discussing with you the ways I can contribute to Mock and Biddle's future. If you have any questions, please call me at 314-111-1111 or email me at uberski@wustl.edu. I will call you next week to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet.

Sincerely,

Mark Uberski
Enclosure: Resume

Comment [TLH1]: This is a sample letter. Don't copy the letter and change slightly. Use this as a guide only and write the letter in your OWN words. Recruiters can tell when the difference between a template and an originally written letter. Each letter should be tailored to the position and organization.

Comment [TLH2]: Make sure your address is consistent with your resume.

Comment [TLH3]: The letter is addressed to the hiring manager. It is important to research who is the right recipient for your letter.

Comment [TLH4]: It is important to highlight your degree and major(s) so that they know right away you are qualified for the position.

Comment [TLH5]: Provide key information that demonstrates you are an ideal candidate for the position. Give them a hook so they will want to read the next paragraph.

Comment [TLH6]: Demonstrate that you have done your research about the company and tell why they impress you.

Comment [TLH7]: It is important to include quantifiable results relevant to the position.

Comment [TLH8]: Connect the dots! After providing information about your relevant experience, connect the experiences and skills to the position or organization. Review the job description to ensure you address the qualifications they are seeking.

Comment [TLH9]: Always thank the reader!!

Comment [TLH10]: Always include your contact information in the body of the letter.

Comment [TLH11]: Always include follow up information that is appropriate to the method of application.

123 University Lane
St. Louis, MO 63105

Today's Date

Ms. Jane Doe
Coordinator - MBA Program
Delta Air Lines
1030 Delta Blvd. Atlanta, GA 30354

Dear Ms. Doe:

As a May 2009 MBA candidate at the Olin Business School at Washington University in St. Louis, with concentrations in Finance and Strategy, I am positioned to make immediate contributions to Delta Air Line's Associate MBA Program. Recently Delta's CEO, Gerald Grinstein, said "2008 was a year full of significant financial challenges for Delta." I'm anxious to apply my expertise in capital budgeting, resource allocation, and financial analysis to help Delta make the improvements necessary to meet its stated goals of improved cost reduction, customer relations, and operational efficiency. I have already seen Delta take significant steps in reaching out to customers through socially responsible acts such as shipping school supplies free of cost to Iraq as part of the rebuilding effort.

The following represent selected attributes that qualify me as an ideal candidate for this position:

- **Problem Solving Skills** – I recently completed a summer internship in telecommunications which involved managing a complicated project. As a result, I've developed proficiencies for recognizing problems, breaking them apart, and then providing appropriate courses of actions and deliverables which will resolve them.
- **Detailed Analysis** – I have learned some of the latest and most recent quantitative analysis and modeling techniques which will facilitate precise, timely, and thorough results.
- **Communication Skills** – While with my former employer, I routinely gave presentations to my division's upper management, including senior managers, directors, and the VP, regarding my group's quarterly sales numbers. In addition, I conducted technical training seminars to new members of the group as well as "refresher" courses to existing group members.

For your consideration, I have enclosed my résumé which contains my current contact information. I would like to schedule an interview so I could express my desire to join Delta Air Lines and learn more about the rotational program. I can be reached by phone at (314) 777-3111 or by email at talcherkars@olin.wustl.edu. I will call you next week to follow up and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Enclosure: Résumé

777 Briarholly Dr.
St. Louis, MO 63130

Today's date

Ms. Jane Doe
Director, International Procurement
Nestle Purina Pet Care
1234 Street Dr, Suite 123
St. Louis, MO, 63130

Dear Ms. Doe:

Every afternoon when I arrive home from work I give my puppy, Gatsby, a Purina Dental Chew before taking him for a run. Giving Gatsby these dental chews is a regular habit and I like knowing that my puppy is receiving the best. Speaking of the best, I am writing to express my interest in the International Procurement Position with Nestle Purina Pet Care, a company that I would love to work for. I am an MBA student at the Olin School of Business, Washington University and upon graduation in May 20 --, I would like to further my experience in the area of procurement and international negotiations. As a user of many pet products, I am very familiar with Purina Pet Care and feel my professional experience and interests will be a fine fit with Purina.

My extensive knowledge of international procurements was gained through four years of purchasing experience with The Boeing Company and six years of business curriculum. As a senior procurement agent for The Boeing Company, I am currently supporting a large United Kingdom supply base and maintain the full responsibility for the international procurement activity on the Harrier AV8B Program. I have negotiated and implemented several performance based long term procurement contracts with a variety of UK suppliers, applying my knowledge of international business practices and export requirements. Based on the governmental nature of these contracts, I have become familiar with the import and export requirements of the United States when contracting with foreign suppliers and act as the subject matter expert on ITAR regulations, import compliance and export requirements with our foreign supply base. In addition, I have developed and negotiated several multimillion dollar purchase contracts in foreign currency by working with Boeing Treasury to secure hedge funds and mitigate the exchange rate risk to the company.

I welcome the opportunity to talk with you further about my experience, qualifications and interests and more about the International Procurement Position at Nestle Purina Pet Care. I believe that my professional experiences, global background, and business education will be a valuable asset to Purina. My resume is attached for your consideration and I can be reached at (314) 555-5555 or at barkinl@gmail.com. I will follow up with you by the end of next week, unless we speak sooner. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your name here

Attachment: Résumé

123 University Lane
St. Louis, MO 63105

Today's Date

Ms. Jane Doe
Recruiting Coordinator
Boston Scientific Corporation
4100 Hamline Avenue North
St. Paul, MN 55112

Dear Ms. Doe:

As a second-year MBA student at the Olin Business School at Washington University in St. Louis, with Marketing and Strategy concentrations and a background in Biomedical Engineering, I am very interested in a full-time position at Boston Scientific Corporation, particularly the Field Clinical Representative and Product Manager positions.

This semester, I am the team leader on the Boston Scientific-sponsored Practicum project, where my team is developing methodologies to profile four specified job positions. We will also be creating a target marketing strategy for Boston Scientific to use in recruiting prospective employees in these positions. I was fortunate to be on the winning team for the Boston Scientific case during Integrated Case Experience (ICE) Week and have been working with my team on writing the case for next year's ICE Week. These projects confirmed for me that the medical device industry and Boston Scientific Corporation in particular, would be an excellent match for my interests and background. My qualifications include:

- **Strong Leadership Skills** – As a leader in several campus organizations, including the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), I have learned how to successfully motivate and direct a team toward the common goal of educating and empowering women in engineering. My largest leadership role has been serving as the chair of the 2008 SWE Regional Conference. Using organizational and time-management skills, plus enthusiasm, I led our organization to plan a successful conference. My role as team leader for our Boston Scientific Practicum project has provided valuable educational experience in the medical device industry.
- **Proven Quantitative and Analytical Skills** – My bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering has given me the necessary proficiencies to analyze business situations quantitatively and provide comprehensive, analytic solutions. My engineering degree has also given me a solid technical background and the capability to solve problems and quickly learn new technologies.

I have met several Boston Scientific employees and it was clear that they not only enjoy their jobs but also appreciate working for Boston Scientific. The prospect of joining a company where the work would be both rewarding and challenging is the primary reason I chose to pursue a career at Boston Scientific.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I have enclosed my résumé which contains my current contact information. I look forward to discussing with you the ways I can contribute to Boston Scientific's future. If you have any questions, please call me at 314-111-1111 or email me at uberski@wustl.edu. I will call you next week to follow up and welcome an opportunity to meet with you.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Enclosure: Résumé

Thank You Notes

Thank you letters are a must. Regardless of how important you feel the informational interview, phone screen, campus interview, or onsite interview may have been, it is imperative to send some sort of acknowledgement to the employer. Thank you notes can be in the form of formal letters, thank you cards sent through the mail, or email. Each type of thank you acknowledgement sets a specific tone, so evaluate your situation carefully before opting to use a specific type of thank you. The rule of thumb: If you and the employer have communicated by email as part of your interview process, an email thank you note is acceptable. However, it should be professional and contain the same information as a written note.

Remember to thank the employer for their time, reiterate your interest in the position and any specific details about the job that may have been mentioned by the employer, mention anything you feel may set you apart from the next candidates, and reiterate your interest in future communication or follow-up.

Thank You Note Sample Text

Dear Mr. Flanton,

I want to thank you for the time you spent with me this past Thursday discussing the Investment Banking position. My interest in the position has grown after our in-depth conversation regarding the structure of the Public Finance team and the continued professional development employees receive. I am confident that my internship experiences with Goldman Sachs, and the knowledge I gained on Mock and Biddle's model portfolio during my graduate research project, have prepared me well for a full-time position with Mock and Biddle.

I look forward to the next steps in the interview process and hope to hear from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Mark Uberski

Dear Ms. Miller,

I enjoyed our conversation regarding the internship opportunity available this summer in the Insurance Marketing department at Edward Jones. Our discussion surrounding the importance of applying the four P's of Marketing (Price, Product, Place, and Promotion) heightened my enthusiasm and eagerness to become a part of the Edward Jones Insurance Marketing team.

I look forward to the potential of successfully contributing to your team. Please feel free to contact me at 314-555-1212 for additional information.

Regards, Lauren Smith

Formatting Emails

Subject: Write Informative Subject Line

Dear Ms. Smith:

When you are using email for business correspondence, keep the following tips in mind:

- Include an appropriate salutation. Use titles for customers, prospective employers, and others who you don't know well. Reserve information salutations such as "Hi" for people you know well.
- Use bullets for information that can be presented in list form.
- Use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Keep your email concise.
- Consider sending lengthy messages as an attachment – write a brief executive summary email to describe the attachment.
- Avoid sending negative or confidential information by email.
- End with a positive goodwill statement.
- Use an appropriate closing. Reserve informal closings such as "Later" for people you know well.
- Include contact information in your signature. Many organizations, like Olin, ask that employees end with a branded signature.

Sincerely, Sharon

Sharon McMillen Cannon, PhD.
Washington University in St. Louis
OLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL

Student Self-Review Checklist	MBA Cover Letter Review Criteria	Career Advisor Checklist	Recommendations for Improvement
	<p>Overall Appearance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One page, block format, 12 point font, left justified • Does not look like a mass produced letter • Appears to be targeted to the position • No spelling or grammatical errors • “I” is not overused • No one-sentence paragraphs • Clear and simple sentences • Tone is assertive and not arrogant 		
	<p>Return Address and Date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your name is not included • Street address is on one line (same address as on resume) • One line for city, state, and zip • Date is accurate 		
	<p>Inside Address and Salutation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter is addressed to an individual • Spelling of name and title has been double-checked • Full address is included • No email or phone number included • Last name is used for salutation • A colon is used, not a comma 		
	<p>Opening Paragraph:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If someone has referred you to this position or company, it is mentioned in the first line • The position and company are identified, as well as the reason you are interested in both • How you found out about the position (website, Careerlink, job board) is included • Class status, school, and majors are identified • A few key strengths that make you an ideal candidate and focus on employer needs are included 		
	<p>Middle Paragraph:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least three relevant accomplishments, experiences, and/or characteristics are included (but are not a restatement of your resume) • International experiences are highlighted, if applicable 		

Student Self-Review Checklist	MBA Cover Letter Review Criteria	Career Advisor Checklist	Recommendations for Improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantifiable results are included, if applicable • Action verbs and key words are used • Experiences are not exaggerated 		
	<p>Closing Paragraph:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A thank you to the reader is included • Note that resume is enclosed or attached • Includes contact (phone and email) and follow-up information which varies by type of application • If on campus - "I look forward to meeting you" • If a resume referral or independent outreach - state when you will contact them 		