

Cover Letters

Beyond The Resume: Professional Correspondence



In A Job Search Effective Written Communication Is Critical: With the rising popularity of email, Internet resume referral systems and other computerized job posting networks, letter writing has become a “lost art.” Even though resumes are zipping across the Internet, these letters still play an important part of any job search and knowing how to write an effective letter is “a must” for any job seeker. Since most hiring managers refuse to take phone calls from candidates, your written correspondence will have to do the talking for you; therefore, every effort should be made to present yourself in the best possible light.

Your cover letter speaks volumes about your ability to communicate and will often help the hiring manager decide whether to continue on to review your resume. You have about thirty seconds to keep the reader’s attention in your cover letter, so be a person of interest.

PLACE YOUR FULL PAGE AD HERE



AD SHOULD FEATURE YOUR LOGO

Full Page Advertisement For Your
Organization will be placed here on the
Second page of the handout.

Students accessing the pageflip version
will see the ad quickly

Students who print out the PDF version
will have a copy of the ad

“Your cover letter speaks volumes about your ability to communicate”

Research the organization and address the needs of the organization. Give the reader a reason to review your resume and to interview you. Think from the reader's perspective and most importantly, personalize the letters. You may be writing several letters a day to different employers, but nothing will ensure your resume getting thrown in the trash than a letter with the wrong company name or position on it. Every position is different and you must tailor each letter to take this into account. Always remember to end your letter on a “proactive” note by telling them how and when you will follow-up with them.

Types of Professional Correspondence

COVER LETTER (LETTERS OF APPLICATION): Even if a cover letter is not specifically requested in a job ad, employers always expect to receive one. Though job seekers will spend hours developing their resumes, they often spend little or no time on creating their cover letters. This can be a critical mistake. This highly significant letter can be the deciding factor in whether or not you get an interview, so take the time to make it notable. A cover letter provides information that your resume does not, such as your work style, resourcefulness and personality. This letter will allow the reader to decide if he/she wants to take the time to read your resume and ultimately invite you to interview for the position.

THANK-YOU LETTER: A thank-you letter should always be sent immediately following an employment or informational interview. Thank-you letters help to reiterate your interest in the position and organization as well reinforce why you feel you are qualified for the position. It also illustrates that you have the ability to follow-up and be proactive. Sending a thank-you letter may be the deciding

factor in who is offered the position. Make your letter interesting and detailed. Mention something about the interview, such as a staff member you met, or something you failed to **bring up in the interview that you feel will be beneficial to the organization.**

ACCEPTANCE LETTER: Even if you don't enjoy writing letters, you will enjoy writing an acceptance letter. The company should have sent you a written job offer that outlines the offer, including compensation, benefits and start date. This offer letter is the company's way of completing the legal agreement between you and the company, but it is your responsibility to verify the details of the offer. The acceptance letter can be used to clarify details of the offer that may have been vague or unclear and state explicitly what you are agreeing to.



DON'T FORGET TO:

- Thank the company for the offer.
- Accept the position.
- Restate the terms of your contract. These may include salary, benefits, location or others.
- Restate any instructions given to you by the company. These might include your start date or the hours you will be working.
- State your happiness at joining the company.



DECLINE OF OFFER LETTERS

With today's unemployment rates, many job seekers feel fortunate to receive any job offer. But often it is necessary to turn down an offer. Whether it is because the compensation is too low, the location is inconvenient or it just isn't the right fit, you may just need to say, "No thank you." During these often long and stressful job searches, it is tempting to simply turn down the offer over the phone and ignore writing a letter. You never know if or when you will work with this organization again, so end the interview process on a professional note. Also remember to keep this letter prompt, courteous, diplomatic and concise.

IMPORTANT TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE LETTERS

Following these correspondence letter tips can take time, but the reward is worth it: more calls for interviews and a greater chance of securing a new position.

Always Send A Cover Letter! The first rule of cover letter etiquette is to send a cover letter-always. It does not matter if the hiring manager didn't ask for it or you're too busy to write one. It is proper business etiquette to accompany a resume with a cover letter, and it gives you the opportunity to help sell yourself.



Keep it Professional But Friendly: While a resume is generally a formal document, a cover letter gives you a chance to reveal your personality. Not only do you want to show that you are a good fit for the position, but you also want the reader to feel good about you. Your letter should have a friendly and professional tone. Keeping your letter professional and friendly can help endear you to the hiring manager.

Make It Personal: If at all possible, address your letter to the hiring manager. If you cannot get this information, at least get the name of the HR representative in charge of recruiting for the position. You can usually get a name from the company website, an employer directory, or by phoning the organization directly. If you do this research, it will enhance the chances of your resume and cover letter getting "ahead" of the rest of the candidates. Keep the salutation professional by using "Dear Mr. Jones," not "Dear Jim." Using "Dear Hiring Manager" is always a last resort but is acceptable if you truly cannot get a contact name.

Focus On The Employer's Needs: Before writing a cover letter, research the employer and find out what types of problems hiring managers are facing, qualities they look for in employees and their future goals. An effective letter illustrates to the employer that you understand and can meet the company's needs. Most importantly, do not focus on your needs; focus on theirs. Use the words "I" and "me" sparingly. If every other sentence of your letter begins with "I" or "my," you need to consider changing the focus. Use this letter to prove that you are the answer to their problems. The most persuasive letters explain what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.

Typing The Envelope

(Below is an example of a typical business envelope)

Samantha Jobseeker
5442 Apple Lane
Jacksonville, FL 32256



Mr. Will Receiveit
Director of Human Resources
The All American Company
1234 Bless America Drive
Jacksonville, Florida, 32224

Basics Of A Cover Letter

Your Street Address
City, State, Zip
Date of Letter

Contact name
Contact's Title
Contact's Department
Name of Organization
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Contact's Last Name:

First Paragraph: State why you are writing, name the position or type of work for which you are applying, and mention how you heard of the opening.

Second Paragraph: Explain why you are interested in working for the employer, and specify your reasons for desiring this type of work. If you have had experience, be sure to point out your particular achievements or other qualifications in this field or type of work.

Third Paragraph: Refer the reader to the attached application, resume or to whatever media you are using to illustrate your training, interests and experience.

Fourth Paragraph: Have an appropriate closing to pave the way for the interview by asking for an appointment, by giving your phone number, or by offering some similar suggestion to facilitate an immediate and favorable reply.

Sincerely,

(sign your name here)

Type Your Full Name

Enclosure: Resume (Indicate what is enclosed with letter; i.e. resume; transcript, etc.)

Standard Business Letter: Block Format

Your Street Address
City, State, Zip
Date of Letter

Contact name
Contact's Title
Contact's Department
Name of Organization
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Contact's Last Name:

First Paragraph: State why you are writing, name the position or type of work for which you are applying, and mention how you heard of the opening.

Second Paragraph: Explain why you are interested in working for the employer, and specify your reasons for desiring this type of work. If you have had experience, be sure to point out your particular achievements or other qualifications in this field or type of work.

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Fourth Paragraph: Have an appropriate closing to pave the way for the interview by asking for an appointment, by giving your phone number, or by offering some similar suggestion to facilitate an immediate and favorable reply.

Sincerely,

(sign your name here)

Type Your Full Name

Enclosure: Resume (Indicate what is enclosed with letter; i.e. resume; transcript, etc.)

Sample Letter of Application: Block Format

100 Main Street
Jacksonville, FL 32224
January 14, 2012

Ms. Janet Osgood
Executive Director
Communities in Schools of Jacksonville
1234 Jacksonville Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32224

Dear Ms. Osgood:

I am writing to apply for the Program Coordinator position as advertised in the Florida Times Union on Sunday, January 13, 2012. I will soon graduate (May 2012) from the University of North Florida with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology, with a minor in Psychology. I am very interested in becoming a part of your organization.

I am currently interning with the Duval County Family Resource Center. As part of this experience, I have had the opportunity to work with a team which is developing a new program of mentoring youth with a focus on goal setting. This program is implemented during counseling sessions. I currently work with a caseload of 20- 25 youth. This program is being funded by a grant from the National Stay in School Foundation. In addition, I have interacted with youth via experiences with the Brighten Center, Mental Health Services of Jacksonville and the Boys and Girls organization.

These experiences are complemented by my camp counselor assignments and broad range of course work gained during my time at UNF. I am fully prepared to work with students in grades 9-12. I am very impressed with the accomplishments of Communities in Schools and greatly desire to be a contributing member of your team.

I have enclosed a copy of my resume for your review. I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications. I will call you within the next two weeks to arrange a convenient time to meet. If you need to contact me, I can be reached at 904-123-1234 after 6:00 p.m. or by email at ssunshine@hotmail.com. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Doe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jonathan Doe
Enclosure: Resume

Sample Letter of Application: Block Format

100 Main Street
Jacksonville, FL 32224
January 14, 2012

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Communities in Schools of Jacksonville
1234 Jacksonville Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32224

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Sincerely,



Jonathan Doe
Enclosure: Resume

Sample Letter of Application: Block Format

123 All American Way
Jacksonville, FL 32256
November 18, 2009

Dr. Wilma Flintstone
Counseling Center
Schultz Hall, Room 2121
University of North Florida
4567 St. Johns Bluff Road South
Jacksonville, FL 32225-2645

Dear Dr. Flintstone:

Enclosed is my resume for the Associate Director of Student Affairs position (#24382) that was advertised on the University of North Florida's web site. I have extensive experience in supervisory and managerial skills, and have been successful in utilizing these techniques in the execution and performance of budget management and policy-making.

For the past seven years I have worked with students in various capacities including University Housing, Student Life, and Student Government. My interest in diversity issues and populations has motivated me to nurture my own organizational and leadership skills. Throughout my years of experience, I have provided administrative support and direction, as well as having assisted in the administration and interpretation of laws, rules, policies, and procedures. I have been responsible for managing budgets of over 5 million dollars. I have represented various departments on university, State University System, and state committees. I am skilled at anger management and assisting persons with behavioral problems. I have also conducted presentations and seminars on a variety of topics.

My education in the mental Health Counseling program increased my interest, knowledge, and enthusiasm for personal counseling, in addition to counseling students and parents in social, cultural, health, and psychological areas affecting student development outside the academic programs. I am a hard worker and a quick study. I bring with me strong organizational skills, warmth, conscientiousness, loyalty, enthusiasm, extensive experience working with college students, and demonstrated counseling skills. I continue to hone my interpersonal skills. As a result, I am very effective with diverse populations and can function in a complementary role with my colleagues, referral sources, parents and the general public.

I am excited about the possibility of joining the team at the University of North Florida. I am most appreciative of your consideration and would welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications and interest in this position. If you need to contact me, I can be reached at 904-555-1234 after 6:00 p.m.

Sincerely,



Nikki Freshman

Enclosure: Resume and References

Sample Letter of Application: Semi-Block Format

2339 Ernest St
Jacksonville, FL 32204
October 13, 2012

Paul Smith
Director of Human Resources
Randstad North America for TRANSFLO
200 W Forsyth St. Suite. 1510
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Dear Mr. Smith:

I would like to apply to TRANSFLO for the position of Technical Intern. Your position, which was communicated by Ms. Sara Brown would provide me an opportunity to deepen my critical thinking skills and to assist TRANSFLO with ensuring safety not just for its employees and partners, but also the environment.

My position as a technical support representative with America Online required extensive knowledge of the software and the different operating systems used. Guiding customers through a series of instructions entailed obtaining details of their computer, the processes involved and the outcomes. I earned numerous awards because customers rated my knowledge and first-time fix rate at levels that exceeded company expectations. Software developers also chose me to work on a special project that created a resolution database used by approximately 1,000 other technicians. Each project life-cycle identified a problem, compiled and analyzed related data and developed and tested resolutions.

I will graduate from the University of North Florida in December 2009 with a Bachelor of Science in Computer and Information Sciences (Information Systems concentration) and a minor in Business Administration. As a student, the nature of my curriculum deals with problem solving. My high grade point average reflects my commitment to education and excellence.

I look forward to applying my course knowledge and experience to this program and I am eager to discuss further my qualifications. You may reach me at 904.233.8543 or estm0002@unf.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Doe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jonathan Doe

Sample Letter of Application: Semi-Block Format

25 Always Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32224
January 22, 2012

Mr. Hiram Firem
Director, Staff Writers
Times Union
100 Water Street
Jacksonville, FL 32225

Dear Dr. Firem:

I would like to be considered as a candidate for the position of Staff Writer with the Times Union. I learned about the opening through the job vacancy listing which appeared on the Times Union website.

This May I will graduate from the University of North Florida with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Communication, with a track in Journalism, and English as a minor. As you will note on the enclosed resume, I am currently interning at the Times Union. I have been allowed the opportunity to shadow several writers and learn what the Times Union seeks in its' staff writers. I am honored to have submitted, for approval, articles concerning the Hope Fund.

As a writer for the Spinnaker, our UNF Student Newspaper, I now have the responsibility of assuring that our junior writers contribute news worthy articles for the UNF community. I have also gained experience as a writer with Cox Communications and the Jacksonville Business Journal. I believe I have the skills and qualifications needed to work effectively as a Times Union Staff Writer.

My transcripts are being forwarded to you by the registrar's office. I have also enclosed the names and addresses of three references. Please let me know if any additional information is required. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this position and my qualifications in more detail in a personal interview. I will contact you within the next two weeks to arrange a time to meet. If you prefer to contact me, I can be reached after 6:00 p.m. at 904-123-1234 or by email at nwriter@aol.com.

Thank you for your consideration, I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,



Nikki Freshman
Enclosure: Resume and References

Sample Letter of Application: Semi-Block Format

25 Always Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32224
January 22, 2012

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Director, Staff Writers
Times Union
100 Water Street
Jacksonville, FL 32225

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Thank you for your consideration, I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nikki Freshman". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Nikki Freshman
Enclosure: Resume and References

Sample Letter of Application: Semi-Block Format

25 Always Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32224
April 25, 2012

Dr. Hiram Firem
Superintendent of Schools
East Side Public School District
123 Learning Lane
Jacksonville, FL 12444

Dear Dr. Firem:

I would like to be considered as a candidate for the position in the English Department at the East Side Senior High School. I learned about the opening through the job vacancy listing which appeared in the Florida Times Union.

In May, 2012 I will be graduating from the University of North Florida with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education with a specialization in English. As you will note on the enclosed resume, I am currently student teaching at West Side High School in Jacksonville. I am working with juniors and seniors in required English courses and in an elective writing class. As co-sponsor of the student Golden Key Club, I have had an opportunity to work with students outside the classroom as well. I believe I have the skills and qualifications needed to work effectively with the students, faculty, and administration of East Side Senior High.

My transcripts are being forwarded to you by the registrar's office. I have also enclosed the names and addresses of three references. Please let me know if any additional information is required. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this position and my qualifications in more detail in a personal interview. If you need to contact me, I can be reached after 6:00 p.m. at 904-123-2555.

Thank you for your consideration, I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Doe
Enclosure: Resume

Thank-you Letter Post Interview: Semi-Block Format

134 Apple Lane
Jacksonville, FL 32245
April 20, 2012

Dr. Sarah Newman
Principal
All American School
1234 School Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32225

Dear Dr. Newman:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you earlier today regarding the Ninth Grade Mathematics position. The discussion we had was particularly informative and I found myself even more enthusiastic about this position. I was very impressed with the philosophy of your school and the support for teachers from the community.

To reiterate my qualifications, I believe that the research and writing skills I have acquired here at the University of North Florida combined with my teaching experiences at East High School and Ribault High School make me a strong candidate for your position. I work well independently, am able to manage my time efficiently, and communicate easily with all types of people. To clarify my present situation, I will be graduating the week of May 6th and will be available for employment beginning August 16th.

Again, I appreciate your time and consideration. Should you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at home (904) 324-7777. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nikki Freshman". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Nikki Freshman

Letter of Acceptance-Job Offer: Block Format

123 Camp Drive
Box 3000
Jacksonville, FL 32234
April 28, 2008

Dr. Bill Danders
Senior Engineer
NCR Microelectronics
4435 Northpark Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32225

Dear Dr. Danders:

I was very pleased to receive your phone call on April 27, 2012 in which you invited me to become a member of your organization as a Systems Analyst. I enthusiastically accept your offer of employment at an annual salary of \$41,000, beginning May 1, 2012.

I am enclosing the completed personnel form and official transcripts you requested from me. I am certain that my educational background and previous work experience will permit me to be a contributing member of NCR.

The opportunities with your organization appear to offer a real challenge, and I shall make every attempt to meet your expectations. I look forward to seeing you on May 1st, but please feel free to contact me via phone at (904) 273-5555 or email at sdavis@email.com should you need to reach me prior to my start date.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Doe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jonathan Doe

Enclosures: Personnel Form; Official Transcripts

Decline Offer Letter: Semi-Block Format

123 Camp Drive
Box 3000
Jacksonville, FL 32234
April 30, 2012

Dr. Bill Danders
Senior Engineer
NCR Micro Electronics
4435 Northpark Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32225

Dear Dr. Danders:

Thank you very much for your letter offering me employment as a Systems Analyst within your organization. Your confidence in me is very much appreciated.

After considerable thought, I have decided to accept another position which seems to fit my needs and qualifications more closely. This has been a very difficult decision for me and only time will tell whether or not my decision is correct.

Thank you again for your time and patience with my decision-making process. I will remember your company favorably throughout my career.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nikki Freshman". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Nikki" and last name "Freshman" clearly legible.

Nikki Freshman

Enclosure: Resume and References

Letter Requesting An Informational Interview: Block Format

1234 Peartree Lane
Jacksonville, FL 32224
May 3, 2012

Mr. Randall T. Winston
Partner
Edwards, Winston, and Smith
Attorneys at Law
20050 Lincoln Rd.
Jacksonville, FL 32226

Dear Mr. Edwards:

I am writing on the recommendation of Professor Marty Edwards, Pre-Law Advisor at the University of North Florida (UNF). Dr. Edwards and I have discussed my interest in the field of law, and he suggested that since you are an alumnus of UNF who practices law, you might be willing to offer some advice and provide me with information about the best way to prepare for a career in law. I have enclosed a copy of my resume to familiarize you with my background.

At present, I am looking for a position as a paralegal or legal assistant. It is my intention to gain some exposure to legal work and learn some of the fundamental skills required of a lawyer before applying to law school. I would be interested in your thoughts concerning this strategy.

I would like to arrange a meeting with you in the next two weeks to discuss specific questions about the legal profession. I will call your office the week of June 8th in order to arrange an appointment at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Doe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jonathan Doe

Enclosure
Cc: Dr. Marty Edwards