Job Search Correspondence

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Corresponding with Employers

Job search correspondence—cover letters, thank you letters, acceptance letters, declining letters, etc.—usually receive a lot less attention to detail than a resume. However, they are just as, if not more, important in your job search strategy. BBA Career Services recommends that **ALL** job search correspondence be typed in a block-style business letter format. With today's technology a majority of job search correspondence will be sent via e-mail. You will occasionally still mail a cover letter, and when doing so you should use the same quality and color of paper you used for your resume. Whatever method you utilize, always use proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Just like your resume, make sure that your correspondence is a good reflection of you.

Cover Letters

The type of correspondence most frequently utilized in the job search process is the cover letter. Cover letters serves as an introduction of yourself and your resume to the employer. A great cover letter should immediately catch the interest of the recruiter and encourage him/her to continue reading the resume.

An excellent cover letter is crucial for success in the job search process. It is difficult for an employer to think a candidate is qualified if a cover letter is filled with typographical errors, poor grammar, redundancy, and run-on sentences or lacks focus and sincere interest.

Customize your cover letter for the specific company and job you are targeting. We do not recommend sending a mass-produced letter to a potential recruiter. They will most likely spot it immediately. To customize your letter, note the targeted position and how you heard about it. Show that you have researched the company and have a clear career objective in mind. Express why you are interested in the position. Make the connection between you—your skills, abilities, and experiences—and the job requirements.

Some common cover letter mistakes:

- Letters are too lengthy.
- Letters lack passion, interest, & substance or are form letters (letter not tailored to the specific company/position).
- Letters prove to the reader that the job seeker has failed to make the connection between the job seeker and the employer.
- Letters are poorly written.

Formatting tips:

- Text size should be 10-12 pt. font, use the same font type as used on your resume.
- Cover letters should be no longer than one page (approximately 3 - 4 paragraphs).
- Block-style business letter format with all information left justified.

Building the Cover Letter

Sections of the Cover Letter

Sender Information: Include your address at the top left of your letter. The date the letter is sent should appear next—it is written below the sender's address information.

Recipient/Employer Information: The recipient's name should appear at the left margin, below the date and sender's information. Include his/her full name (first and last) spelled correctly, title, department/division, company name, and address. If you are uncertain about any of the above information, call the company to confirm. Note: If no contact information can be found, the following would be appropriate: *Re: Central Intelligence Agency Employment*

Salutation: The salutation should be in business style, preferably "Dear Mr. or Ms. _____". It is not a good idea for you to address the employer by their first name in a cover letter. If you cannot locate the contact name then use "Dear Recruiter or Dear Hiring Manager."

I**ntroduction Paragraph:** Use an opening line to catch the reader's attention, and avoid opening phrases like*, "My name is Jill…"* The introduction should identify the job/position which you are seeking, mention your education and graduation year, refer to how you learned of the organization and/or of the position and illustrate that you have the skills necessary for the qualifications. You are seeking to convince the recruiter that you are the ideal candidate for the position and will spend the rest of your letter (in the body paragraph(s)) *showing (not telling)* that you have these qualifications. Develop a thesis statement to transition into the body of the letter.

Body Paragraphs: The next section of your letter is the body or the core of your letter, and should be 1-2 paragraphs. In the introduction, you made the initial connection between the job qualifications and your skill set. Now, you must prove that the claim you made in the first paragraph is actually true. Review the job description carefully and thoroughly. Tailor your cover letter to include the requirements that you fulfill and then note any other special things about yourself that may also be related to the position.

There are two basic formats for writing your body paragraphs:

1. In a **Structured Approach**, you will take the qualifications you mentioned in the introduction and, *one by one*, give an example, story, anecdote or evidence illustrating your mastery of that skill. This approach follows a formulaic "claim-evidence" pattern. For example, if they list "excellent organizational skills" as a required qualification, then you should indicate *how and/or what* you did in a previous position or leadership role that exhibited that skill. (i.e. - While serving as VP for Corporate Outreach for Asian Business Student Association, I was able to successfully schedule guest speakers and manage logistics for an evening networking event in which approximately 100 Asian Business Student Association members and 10 employers participated. The evening was a great success.)

2. **A Fluid Approach** uses a more fluid method by telling a story or two and extracting your evidence from the story. For instance, you could use one experience that illustrates your leadership abilities and financial analysis skills. You might have one paragraph describing the incident and then another explaining why that incident is relevant.

You should avoid being too formulaic with your approach. Generally speaking, you want to strike a balance between structure and fluidity. However, there is no "right" way to structure your cover letter. BBA Career Services has several resources that can help you write your cover letter, but make sure to adapt sample letters to your own needs and style.

Closing Paragraph: Reiterate your interest in the position/company. Refer back to one special attribute about yourself: what makes you qualified for the job? Initiate the next step for the reader. If appropriate indicate when you will follow up with the reader on the status of your application (note - a majority of positions posted in OCR do not contain specific contact information, and you will not be able to follow-up with the employer). Let the reader know where and when you can be reached or let them know when you will be in touch with them. Close with a thank you.

Valediction/Close: If you are sending a word document as your cover letter, you will need to "sign" the document. If have an electronic signature, then use that. If not, find a different appropriate font to use as a signature. Also, include your typed name below the signature line and continue the same steps as a hard copy typed letter in closing.

If you are enclosing any documents, you can note "Enclosure." and specify which documents are attached or simply note "Enclosure." This tells the reader to look for additional documents and will remind them to keep the documents together. See the examples at the back of this guide for the different ways to indicate enclosures.

Cover Letter Template

Full-Block Format

Heading: (DO NOT include your name)
Your Address
City, State Zip Code

Date of letter

Employer's Name
Title
Department
Organization
Street Address
City, State Zip code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name:

Introduction (1st paragraph):
Refer to how you learned about the employer or the job & name-drop if possible (previous conversation, meeting, correspondence, or job posting) … explain why you are writing … lay down the foundation for your letter, clearly stating why you are qualified (i.e. - I will graduate with a BBA in Accounting in May 2013) and previewing the points (your explanation of how you meet their qualifications–to be written in the body paragraph) of the letter. The paragraph ends with a thesis statement of some kind.

Body (approximately 1 - 2 paragraphs):
(2nd paragraph): The core of your letter … highlight and explain relevant accomplishments (achievements, skills, experiences, attributes, etc.) … *make the connection* between you (and your qualifications) and the **requirements** of the job, tying back to the introduction.

(3rd paragraph, if necessary):
You could highlight one special skill or experience that may set you apart from other candidates … state why you are interested in working for this employer and your interest in this type of work. You could simply break the above information into multiple paragraphs for easier readability.

Closing Paragraph (last paragraph):
Thank the recipient … restate your interest … state the action you expect from the recipient (an interview, an application, a phone call) ... reiterate a strength (why you should be selected) ... indicate your next plan of action and/or offer a specific date of expected action. Provide contact information for employer questions or to reach you for an interview. If you indicate a course of action, you MUST follow through.

Sincerely,

Your Signature **(handwritten)**

Typed Name

Enclosure: Resume

Cover Letter Examples

Cold Call Letter

805 Saint Cloud Rd.
Austin, TX 78712

September 12, 20xx

Mr. Keith Winters
Recruiter Manager
ABC Real Estate
1357 West Lucas St.
Austin, TX 78712

Dear Mr. Winters:

A recent article in the Austin Business Journal, naming ABC Real Estate as one of the top ten firms in the local market, really caught my attention. I am impressed by the success of the company, as well as the CEO's commitment to giving back to the local community. I am currently a student at The University of Texas at Austin, pursuing a degree in management. I plan to graduate May 20XX.

In my hometown, I started an annual charity chili cook-off which has raised $40,000 in the past three years for the Midland Boys and Girls Club. This money has helped pay for sports equipment for children in the after-school program. Although I now live in Austin, I continue to be involved with the charity cook-off and other activities through the Boys and Girls Club.

In addition to pursuing my management degree, I work as a leasing assistant at the apartment complex where I live. I meet with potential residents to show our property and explain the leasing agreement. I also handle maintenance requests and ensure that they are completed in a timely manner. This experience has sparked my interest in a career in property management and real estate.

I believe my values and work ethic make me a great match for opportunities at ABC Real Estate. Enclosed is my resume with additional information regarding my work history and leadership experience. I appreciate your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Larry Longhorn

Larry Longhorn

Enclosure: Resume

Post Event Follow-Up

1234 Dean Keeton
Austin, TX 78712

October 2, 20XX

Ms. Melissa Graham
Lead Recruiter
National Bank
P.O. Box 1341
Wimberley, TX 78676

Dear Ms. Graham:

It was a pleasure meeting you at the National Bank information session last night at The University of Texas. The presentation regarding the bank's focus on consumer lending made me even more interested in the Loan Analyst position posted in the On-Campus Recruiting System.

I am very impressed by the programs the bank offers to assist homeowners with refinancing options during the current housing crisis. As I mentioned at the information session, I am currently taking a real estate class and completed a research project on government loan programs for homeowners facing foreclosure. I am well-informed on the current laws, and I am excited about the possibility of putting this knowledge to use at National Bank.

Thank you again for coming to our campus to discuss the career possibilities at National Bank. I have enclosed my resume for your review, and please contact me if you need additional information regarding my background and qualifications. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Lucy Longhorn

Lucy Longhorn

Enclosure: Resume

Cover Letter Examples Cont'd.

Referral Letter

805 Saint Cloud Rd.
Austin, TX 78712

September 6, 20XX

Mr. Alexander Chisholm
Recruiter
Austin Consulting
400 Bee Caves Road
Austin, TX 78700

Dear Mr. Chisholm:

My professor, Dr. Loescher, suggested I contact you in regards to employment opportunities available at Austin Consulting. I will graduate in May 2012 from The University of Texas at Austin with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Finance, and I am interested in a career in the consulting industry. I enjoy problem solving that involves the use of technology.

Maintaining an overall 3.6 GPA while working 20 hours a week is my proudest accomplishment in college. Working part-time at the Co-op Bookstore has enabled me to gain valuable customer service and supervisory skills. In addition, I have been actively involved as a Vice President for the University Consulting Group. My responsibilities in this role include planning site visits to consulting firms, and bringing in guest speakers for general meetings. My enclosed resume details all of my qualifications for a position with Austin Consulting.

I would like the opportunity to discuss this with you further. Please contact me at your earliest convenience at (512) 555-4321 or at Larry.Longhorn@bba09.mccombs.utexas.edu. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Larry Longhorn

Larry Longhorn

Enclosure: Resume

Response to Ad/Job Listing

1234 Dean Keeton
Austin, TX 78712

March 27, 20xx

Ms. Carolyn Sylvestor
Recruiting Superviosr
Pacific Enterprises, Inc.
2745 Topanga Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 94005

Dear Ms. Sylvestor:

In December, I am graduating from The University of Texas at Austin with a bachelor's degree in Accounting. I am very interested in the Accountant position posted today on the McCombs Job Board. My college work experience and leadership roles have prepared me well for this position.

For the past three years, I have volunteered at the Community Tax Office in Southeast Austin preparing tax returns for low income families. I enjoy the challenge of gathering client information in order to maximize their tax refunds. I have also been recognized for my ability to explain the IRS regulations in simple terms that help clients understand the process.

In addition, I am the Treasurer for my business fraternity, Alpha Kappa Psi. I utilize Excel to track membership dues, external contributions, and the fraternity's expenditures. The total budget I manage for the organization is approximately $100,000. I also present a financial update and corresponding statements to our advisory board on a quarterly basis.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how I can contribute to Pacific Enterprises. Please contact me at your earliest convenience at (512) 555-5544 or at Lucy.Longhorn@bba09.mccombs.utexas.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lucy Longhorn

Lucy Longhorn

Enclosure: Resume

Thank You E-mails/Letters

BBA Career Services recommends that you always send thank you letters immediately following an interview or an office visit (within 24-48 hours). Many students also opt to send thank you letters after meeting an employer at a career fair or an information session as a part of their job search strategy. E-mails are considered appropriate. Be sure to use business language and not make it too 'friendly' or informal. Often, students will send an e-mail and supplement it with a mailed, handwritten note sent later in the week.

Thank You E-mail/Letter Format
The thank you letter is written in a similar method to the cover letter but tends to be less formal. Thank you notes should be brief. Do not elaborate on everything that occurred during the interview but do comment on something significant or add any relevant item that you forgot to address during the interview. In the body of the letter, show sincere gratitude and interest and get your needs and interests across to the employer.

To whom should you send the Thank You E-mail/Letter?
Customarily, a separate and unique thank you note is sent to each person with whom you interviewed. This may get a bit complicated after office visits where you met and interviewed (both formally and informally) with numerous individuals. In this case, send the thank you letters to all those you interviewed with formally and forward your gratitude to others you met casually or briefly through the "head" or "leader" of the team.

Thank You E-mail/Letter Tips

- Personalize the letter
- Single spacing
- Handwritten is preferred for thank you lettersm, using a business letter format; can also be typed
- Send ASAP (within 24 - 48 hours after the interview)
- Include any additional information forgotten during the interview
- Remind the employer of why they should hire you
- Restate your desire regarding the job
- Use good quality paper (24 - 28 lb., 25% cotton), preferably matching your resume and cover letter
- Double check your spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Proofread the letter.
- Don't forget to say thanks to everyone you met or helped coordinate your interview like administrative assistants

Thank You E-mail/Letter Examples

Thank You Letter

805 Saint Cloud Rd.
Austin, TX 78712

September 6, 20XX

Ms. Lucy Magilicudy
Director of Recruiting
The ABC Company
1245 Longhorn Street
Austin, TX 78712

Dear Ms. Magilicudy:

I just wanted to send you a short note to thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to interview me today. I enjoyed meeting with you and the other members of the Accounting Department. I particularly enjoyed learning about your up-and-coming International Division and meeting some of the division's team members.

My extensive accounting studies and auditing experience combined with my fluent Spanish speaking and writing skills would be an asset to The ABC Company, and in particular to its new International Division. I desire to work in a fast-paced and global environment which The ABC Company offers.

I am enclosing additional references, as you requested. Do not hesitate to contact me if you need any additional information. I look forward to your decision regarding the international audit position. Again thank you, and please express my sincere thanks to the rest of the team.

Sincerely,

Larry Longhorn

Larry Longhorn

Enclosure: References

Thank You E-mail

Subject Line of E-mail Message:
Thank You - Assistant Account Executive Interview

E-mail Message:

Dear Ms. Wilson,

I enjoyed speaking with you today about the Assistant Account Executive Position at the Smith Agency. The job seems to be an excellent match for my skills and interests. The creative approach to account management that you described confirmed my desire to work with you. In addition to my enthusiasm, I will bring to the position strong writing skills, assertiveness, and the ability to encourage others to work cooperatively with the department.

I appreciate the time you took to interview me. I am very interested in working for you and look forward to hearing from you regarding this position.

Sincerely,
Lucy Longhorn

Lucy Longhorn
Lucy.Longhorn@bba09.mccombs.utexas.edu
Marketing, May 2013
512-687-5309

E-mails/Letters Related to Offers

Confirming an Offer

In some cases, it is a good idea to confirm the offer with the employer by letter or e-mail. If you have only received a verbal offer and are still waiting for the offer in writing, we recommend that you confirm the offer either in your thank you note (following the interview or office visit) or in a separate e-mail or letter directly to the individual who made the offer. Confirm with them the specifics of the offer, including important dates such as your decision date and possible start date.

Accepting an Offer

BBA Career Services recommends that you confirm your acceptance and the specifics of the offer in a letter or e-mail to the employer. In most cases, this is sent immediately following a telephone acceptance call or an in-person meeting where you have decided to work for a specific employer. In your acceptance letter, make certain to note the date that you accepted the offer. Confirm the specifics of your acceptance - the salary, job title, responsibilities and starting date. If your starting date has not yet been confirmed, then note this in the letter along with your anticipated response date. You can then submit the letter with the original signed offer. Always make a copy of your letter and the signed offer for your files. Don't forget to thank them again for the offer. There is nothing wrong with showing your enthusiasm and interest in starting your new job with the employer.

Declining an Offer and Follow-Up Confirmation

Always call the employer first with your decision, then follow up with a letter. Do not just send a letter and assume that they will receive it. The letter should always be a follow-up to the phone call (not e-mail, text message, or any other means of communicating). In the letter, be sincere and gracious. Be certain to thank them for their time and the offer. You should be brief and concise. You do not need to give the employer the detailed information about what offer you chose and why.

Declining an Offer E-mail

Subject Line of E-mail Message:
Thank You - Market Research Assistant Interview

E-mail Message:

Dear Ms. Lee:

This letter is to confirm our telephone conversation earlier this morning. After taking considerable time in making a decision regarding my employment decision for this coming May, I have decided not to accept your job offer as a Market Research Assistant in your New Products Division.

I enjoyed meeting with you and your team and learning more about your reputable firm. At this time, however, I have decided to pursue another career opportunity.

Thank you again for your time during the recruiting process.

Sincerely,
Larry Longhorn

Larry Longhorn
Larry.Longhorn@bba09.mccombs.utexas.edu
Finance, May 2013
512-555-9999

Accepting an Offer E-mail

Subject Line of E-mail Message:
Market Research Assistant Position

E-mail Message:

Dear Ms. Lee:

This is to confirm my acceptance of the Marketing Research Assistant position in the New Products Division of your company.

As we discussed on the telephone this past Tuesday, April 16th, my starting date will be June 3rd, 2013 and I am to report directly to the Human Resources Department. The salary, bonus structure, and other details have been outlined in your letter to me, of the same date, and are consistent to what was discussed and agreed.

I am looking forward to starting the summer with your dynamic team.

Sincerely,
Lucy Longhorn

Lucy Longhorn
Lucy.Longhorn@bba09.mccombs.utexas.edu
Marketing, May 2013
512-687-5309

References

Most likely for on-campus interviews, you will not be asked for a list of references. However, it is always better to be prepared with a typed list of references. Usually these are requested in the employer's application or during or following the office visit.

Some Helpful Hints in Developing a List of References

- Avoid using friends and immediate family as references
- Focus on professional references: professors, instructors, former or current supervisors
- Contact the individuals **first** and ask if they are willing to serve as positive references
- Consider sending a copy of your resume to your references for them to review your most updated experiences
- Provide your references with an idea of the type of jobs you are pursuing and which employers may contact them
- Confirm with your references which phone number and address they would like used (home and/or work or e-mail).
- Use good quality paper (preferably on paper that matches your resume, cover letter, etc.)
- If you feel it would be relevant to the job or if the employer requests it, then note personal references such as work colleagues, high school teachers, and neighbors who can give the employer an idea of your personal attributes
- Typically 3 - 5 references are sufficient, however, some employers may ask for more or less

Note: It is also a good idea to have your previous employment places, dates, addresses, phone numbers, supervisors, duties, etc. written out and readily available. This will provide you with a resource for completing employment applications. Sometimes you are asked to do this during an interview or office visit.

Reference List Example

LARRY LONGHORN

Larry.Longhorn@bba09.mccombs.utexas.edu
805 Saint Cloud ● Austin, TX ●(512)-555-9999

REFERENCES

Mr. R. J. Reynolds
President
R. J. Reynolds, Inc.
P.O. Box 1234
Chicago, IL 60610
(312) 000-0000
RJ.Reynolds@reference.org

Dr. Susan Brown
Chairman, Department of Finance
The University of Texas at Austin
CBA 6.222
Austin, TX 78712
(512) 000-0000
Susan.Brown@reference.org

Ms. Margaret K. Price
Senior Vice President
Allied Bank
P.O. Box 8426
Dallas, TX 75022
(241) 000-0000
MPrice@allied.com

Tip:

In case your reference list is separated from your resume or cover letter, use the same personal information heading format as your resume.