



The Cover Letter

Cover Letter Basics

- ✓ Employers spend 15-60 seconds the first time they read your cover letter, and they may read it after they look over your resume
- ✓ Recruiters know immediately if a cover letter is generic or tailored
- ✓ Most employers have zero tolerance for spelling or grammatical errors
- ✓ Employers review cover letters in different ways. They can be reviewed on-paper, on a desktop, laptop, tablet or smart phone
- ✓ There is no standard way of writing a cover letter or resume

See our cover letter resources - www.utsc.utoronto.ca/aacc/cover-letters

Before Your Write Your Cover Letter

- ✓ Ensure your resume includes all of your relevant activities. This includes education, academic projects, co-curricular activities, volunteer, and paid employment and (possibly) hobbies
- ✓ For each activity, note the duties, skills, and accomplishments
- ✓ Review the job description. What are the key requirements?
- ✓ Research the employer. Are there key skills or characteristics that they look for in employees?
- ✓ For each key requirement, think about examples where you used or demonstrated the skill. For example, if the employer is asking for customer service skills, think about a time when you helped someone

Cover Letter Components

- ✓ **Standard Letter Heading** - Your letter should start with your contact information as it is set up in your resume – you can copy/paste
- ✓ **Greeting** - Address your letter to a specific person, i.e., "Dear Mr. /Ms. [surname]," not "To Whom It May Concern." If no name is available then use "RE: [Position Title]"
- ✓ **Introductory Paragraph** - State the name of the position to which you are applying and where you saw the position advertised or how you heard about it. If you are not applying for an advertised position, state the type of work you are seeking
- ✓ **Describe your qualifications with evidence (1-2 paragraphs)** - Provide examples of how your skills and experiences relate to the position. Support your statements with examples from work, school, volunteer, or extracurricular experiences. Focus on the contributions you can make to the organization; elaborate on your courses, field work, research, and specific knowledge that relates to the position
- ✓ **Demonstrate your interest (1 paragraph)**. Explain why you are interested in the position and the organization
- ✓ **Concluding Paragraph** - Thank the employer for his/her consideration of your application. State the best method of contacting you (home phone, cell phone and/or email)

Marketing Yourself

Resumes, cover letters, LinkedIn, and interview skills are your key tools for marketing yourself to potential employers.

Attend the *Winning Resumes and Cover Letters* workshop and/or have your cover letter critiqued in the AA&CC.

Take the Time to Shine

- ✓ It takes time and practice to create original, interesting, yet brief letters
- ✓ As with all other skills, however, your writing will improve with practice
- ✓ Ensure you proofread your letters for grammatical and spelling errors!
- ✓ Employers receive a never-ending flood of applications, so it is worth the time to ensure your cover letter stands out

Sample Cover Letter

24 Sussex Gardens
Toronto, ON M6R 1G7

You can also use the Contact Info header from your resume, for a look like professional stationery.

June 5, 2014

Ms. Beatrice Wilson, Media Accounts Coordinator
Malooney, Wilstone and Massey
12 Laurier Park, Suite 3
Toronto, ON M1M 2A9
bwilson@mwm.ca

Write out the full 'snail mail' address even if you are asked to submitted your application by email. This is the style of business letters.

Dear Ms. Wilson,

A former classmate of yours, Mr. Bill Brennan, suggested I contact you about possible opportunities in media relations at Malooney, Wilstone and Massey. As he suggested, I am sending you my resume so that you might review my background for consideration for future openings in your department. I believe my excellent writing, public relations, and presentation skills will enable me to make an immediate contribution to your organizations in a junior role.

As editor of PoliSci & You, the newsletter of the University of Toronto Political Science Students' Association, I write, solicit, and edit articles and advertising copy. You are invited to see my work here: about.me/pssa.utsc Editing has given me an excellent opportunity to build upon the writing skills I developed through my course work. In particular, writing for a mixed audience including both subscribers (students) and advertisers (community members) is a skill I can use effectively in your firm.

Most recently, I organized and successfully publicized the annual fundraising event for St. Mark's Church. This year's attendance surpassed previous years by 60%. My primary contribution to this increase was to send news releases to a dozen local media, three of which promoted the event and covered it on the day. I was also able to secure an interview on a popular radio station to further publicize the event. My public presentation skills have been further developed at university, where I have given well-received seminars as part of my coursework, and through summer work as a campus tour guide.

Through my research I learned that Malooney, Wilstone and Massey is targeting a new client group: small businesses. My knowledge of small businesses gained through running a family business will be of benefit to you as you continue to secure this niche. Through my studies at the University of Toronto, I have gained a solid grasp of current events and a sensitivity to the diverse needs of the public involved in any issue. As well as strong research skills, I have developed outstanding interpersonal skills through my extracurricular activities. I am able to work with demanding people in a tactful way and am resourceful in using the telephone and internet to gather information. I welcome the opportunity to further discuss my suitability for a future role with your firm.

Sincerely,

Kris Leskin

*If you are sending your letter by email, you do not need to sign it.
If you are submitting it on paper, you should sign it.*

Encl. Resume