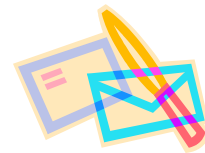




## **BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE**

### **First Impressions**

Oftentimes, the first impression an employer has of a prospective employee is in writing, in the form of a cover letter or letter of application and resume. Opinions are formed and conclusions are drawn from the appearance and content of any correspondence you send.



It is important to make the best possible impression so that an interview will follow. When sending a resume, never send it without a cover letter. Usually, when the reader gets your cover letter and resume he/she will immediately flip the cover letter over and glance at the resume first. This is so that a few facts about you are easily obtained. (i.e. name, objective, education, extend of experience and skills). If the resume interests the reader, he/she will then flip back to the cover letter and read it in detail. In fact, the letter may get more attention than the resume because, although the resume is about you, it is assumed that you had help putting it together. But the cover letter is generally written by the individual and the reader can assess your writing style, communication style and how well you put your thoughts and ideas together.



## **Junk Mail**

The intent of the cover letter is to introduce yourself to the potential employer, highlight the information given on the resume and convince the reader to grant you an interview. But an employer could receive hundreds of letters and resumes every day. It would be like receiving hundreds of pieces of junk mail. How much of it can you read and which ones do you even care to read? An employer may compare your correspondence with other candidates and determine which appears better. To increase your chances of being selected, your letter must spark the interest of the reader, create a favorable impression and look inviting to read.



## **Business Correspondence-The Myth**

The myth about business correspondence is that it must be formal, standardized and often terse. The writer seems to transform him/herself from the personal to the institutional. Letters appear to be written from one “institution” to another rather than from person to person. This does nothing more than create ineffective communication. It is important to develop a good writing style that not only reflects good grammar and sentence structure, but also gives the reader some insight into the personality of the writer. It is just as important, however, to be able to express your self in clear, concise language so the reader knows exactly why you are writing.



## **Tips to follow**

There are lots of examples of cover letters out there. Many use gimmicks and advertising lingo to attract the readers’ attention. While all letters of application should be personalized to be effective, the best letters follow certain basic principles. Many letters are disqualified or discarded because of minor details. Please note the following points:

- Type all letters on good quality business stationery, preferably matching your resume paper
- Use either block style or modified block style; do not use a memo format
- Use black ink only
- Limit your letter to one page, usually three or four paragraphs
- Write in your own words, using your own style
- Do not rehash the entire resume; instead, elaborate on specific points of particular interest to the employer; refer the reader to your resume for additional information
- Make it easy to read; use spell check and grammar check
- Make the format and layout attractive; center the letter on the page; allow ample margins; make it appealing to look at and inviting to the reader
- Watch your sentence structure; proof read the letter several times to be sure you are saying what you want to say
- Do not send photocopies or generic letters; you can create a model letter which can be used many times with slight revisions
- Do not e-mail or fax any business correspondence (resumes, applications, letters, etc) unless you are specifically asked to do so. Even then, follow it up with a hard copy in the mail
- Be sure to sign the letter before you mail it
- I recommend buying large envelopes (9x12) instead of matching business envelopes. That way you can mail your resume and cover letter without having to fold or crease them in any way. Be sure to add the extra postage for a large envelope



**Remember that your letters represent you and may leave a lasting impression on the reader. It is very important to develop good letter writing skills.**

Samples included:

Cover Letters (Application Letter, Letter of Inquiry), Letters of Acknowledgment, Thank You, Acceptance, Refusal and Resignation.

The following samples are meant to be guides for your own letter writing. Do not copy a letter word for word. Employers have read them all and will recognize the samples taken from other sources.

### GENERAL OUTLINE FOR A COVER LETTER

Applicant's Address  
City, State, Zip

Date of Letter

*Use complete title and address*

Employer's Name and Title  
Address  
City, State, Zip

*If possible, address it to a particular person*

Salutation:

**Opening 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 or organization.

*Make the addressee want to read your resume.*

*Be personable and enthusiastic.*

*Be brief but specific; your resume*

*contains details.*

*Top and bottom margins should be equal.*

**Middle Paragraph(s):** Explain why you are interested in working for this employer and specify your reasons for Desiring this type of work. If you have had relevant work experience or related education, be sure to point it out, But do not reiterate your entire resume. Emphasize skills or abilities you have that relate to the job for which you are applying. Be sure to do this in a confident manner and remember that the reader will view your letter of application as an example of your writing skills.

**Closing Paragraph:** You may refer the reader to your enclosed resume (Which gives a summary of your qualifications) or whatever media you are using to illustrate your training, interests and experience. Have an appropriate closing to pave the way for the interview.

*Closing*

Sincerely,

*Always sign letters*

Your name typed

*If a resume or other enclosure is used, note in letter*

Enclosure

## **SAMPLE COVER LETTER**

Ray J. Johnson  
125 Pearl Street  
St. Joseph, MO 64507

October 1, 200XX

Mr. Marvin Paterson, Manager  
Hewlett Packard  
16399 W. Bernardo Drive  
San Diego, CA 92717

Dear Mr. Paterson:

In December 20XX, I will be graduating from Missouri Western State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering Technology. I am writing to explore the possibility of employment as a Control Systems Engineer at your San Diego facility.

Early in my coursework at Western I seriously began considering future employment with Hewlett Packard. We use a number of your products in our laboratory work, and their design, precision and reliability are impressive. More recently, however, I noted in a professional computing journal that you are undertaking a new project to apply microcomputers in automatic control systems. Many of my electives were in the fields of control systems and computers, and I worked for three summers in microcomputer applications. I believe that I am well qualified to begin working on your new project; I know that it is directly related to my interests.

The enclosed resume details my educational background and experience. I will be in the San Diego area the week of November 1<sup>st</sup> and could be available for an interview, if convenient. In the meantime, if you need any further information, you may contact me at 816.277.2222.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Ray J. Johnson

Enclosure

## **SAMPLE COVER LETTER 2**

4600 King Hill Ave.  
St. Joseph, MO 64507

April 15, 20XX

Karen G. Sullivan  
Sullivan & Barnes  
408 Center Street  
Kansas City, MO 64151

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Ms. Susan Burns contacted me recently in connection with an employment opportunity as a legal assistant with your firm. Now that I have completed my education at Missouri Western State University and will graduate with a bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in finance and a legal assistant certification, I am enthusiastic about living and working in Kansas City. It is a good environment in which to learn business law.

Of special interest to me are taxes and tax shelters. I enjoy financial planning and plan on pursuing an MBA in the near future. However, as my resume indicates, I have had the opportunity to become familiar with several areas of business law through the legal assistant program at Missouri Western State University.

I am seeking career-oriented placement, which would allow for increasing levels of responsibility. It interests me to know how your office operates and what might my roles be as a legal assistant in the firm. I am a diligent worker and am determined to perform extensive investigation.

I would like to discuss employment possibilities with Sullivan & Barnes. I am available for an interview at your convenience and look forward to the opportunity to meet with you. If you need any other information or would like to schedule an interview, you may reach me at 816.424.7654.

Sincerely,

Brenda Jacobs

Enclosure

### **SAMPLE COVER LETTER 3**

John Q Student  
123 College Way  
Mayville, MO 64004

March 15, 20XX

Mr. Lesley Nelson  
Director of Human Resources  
Jewel Corporation  
10 West Street  
Springdale, MO 64555

Dear Mr. Nelson:

I am interested in the communications specialist vacancy recently advertised in the Kansas City Star. My work experience and academic preparation have prepared me well for this position.

As you can see from my resume, I will graduate from Missouri Western State University in May with a B.S. in Communications Studies and a minor in Journalism. I am currently completing an internship with Heartland Health Systems in their community relations department. My duties include responsibility for all internal correspondence for three health care sites employing 500 people with 78,000 clients annually. During my college tenure, I was also in charge of public relations and fundraising for three campus organizations.

I have followed the Jewel Corporation's progress and growth over the past four years and admire the strides you have made in technology and innovative marketing techniques. It would be a privilege to be associated with such a leader in the field.

I would like the opportunity to meet with you and to discuss the communications specialist position. Please review the attached resume and, if you need any further information, I can be contacted at 816.234.5678. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

John Q. Student

Enclosure

## **LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Acknowledge the receipt of any correspondence or information. This type of correspondence may include: a letter or postcard from the company stating that your application or resume was received, an invitation to an informational meeting or tour of the company, a letter requesting a second or subsequent interviews, a letter of rejection, or a letter of postponement, delay or change in the selection process. It is important to acknowledge every piece of correspondence.

Irma Smarty  
34 Hyper Drive  
Fast Track, MO 64999  
816.923.4567

April 15, 20XX

Dr. Jonas Barkley  
Spelling Research Institute  
4 Market Drive  
Elmo, MO 64888

Dear Dr. Barkley:

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me at length on the telephone yesterday regarding the research assistant position at Spelling Research Institute. I appreciate the candid and enlightening information you shared with me regarding this position and your research project.

I am very interested in the research position because I have not only assisted I a major research project with Professor Richard Austin at Missouri Western State College, but have conducted three market research projects for businesses in the St. Joseph area. I have enclosed a summary of each of these projects for your review.

I look forward to meeting you in person and hope that we can schedule an interview soon. If you need any further information you may reach me at 816.555.2222.

Again, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Irma Smarty

Enclosures

## LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT 2

15 Spruce Street  
Horton, MO 64987

April 15, 20XX

Mr. Jack Crisper  
Mayer, Spencer & Hayes  
4000 Signal Avenue  
Omaha, NE 43678

Dear Mr. Crisper:

Thank you for letting me know that my resume and credentials have arrived in your office. I also appreciate the brochures and company profile information you sent. Reading about your company has peaked my interest in the Sales Management position.

I have enclosed the completed application as you requested and would be happy to provide any other information you may need. I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you in person, in order to learn more about Mayer, Spencer & Hayes, as well as the position of Sales Manager.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Donna Kovacs

Enclosure

## **THANK YOU LETTER**

Following an interview it is customary to send a thank you letter to the person or persons you met while at the company. Anyone who has provided any assistance during a corporate visit should be thanked in writing. It is a matter of professional courtesy, but it also helps to establish a line of communication between you and the company representatives.

606 Central Avenue  
St. Joseph, MO 64321

April 19, 20XX

Ms. Janice Jones  
Vice-President of Public Relations  
The Hart Agency  
1000 Main Street  
Kansas City, MO 64123

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for the interview on Wednesday April 18<sup>th</sup> with the Hart Agency. I am very interested in the position as Communications Director and I hope that the interest is mutual.

I would consider it a privilege to join your firm. My background in crisis management along with my experience in political campaigns is parallel to the qualifications you are looking for in a candidate for this position. I know I could make a significant contribution to your team.

If you have any questions, please call me at 816.333.4545. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss further the Communications Director position at the Hart Agency and would welcome the opportunity to show you samples of my work.

Sincerely,

Brad Simpson

## THANK YOU LETTER 2

150 Farmington Avenue  
Savannah, MO 64567

April 15, 20XX

Mr. Paul Torrence  
Kahn Enterprises  
1931 W. Willow Drive  
Chicago, IL 00078

Dear Mr. Torrence:

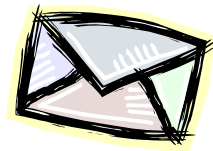
Thank you for meeting with me this morning to discuss the media relations position at Kahn Enterprises. I would like to reiterate my interest in the position and your organization.

The enthusiasm I have felt right along about the possibility of working for you has increased with our meeting. I am more certain than ever that I am well qualified to make the kind of contribution to Kahn that you are expecting from your media relations specialist.

I will look forward to hearing your decision regarding my application. In the meantime, if you need any further information please contact me at 816.233.3232.

Sincerely,

Jason Tribbett



**Thank you letters do not need to be on 8 1/2 x 11 inch stationery. You may hand write a thank you on formal note cards. In fact, this may be a better way to communicate with a prospective employer. A personalized note will get priority by being placed on top of the stack of mail that arrives that day. It may be the first thing the employer reads as he/she goes through the daily mail. It is very important to send thank you letters as soon as possible after the interview. Otherwise, it has no influence over the final hiring decision.**

## LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

It is advisable to accept, in writing, any job offer you receive. That is, assuming you really want the job. Do not accept an offer you are not sure of. If you are interviewing with several companies over the course of a week or two, be honest with the potential employer and ask for time to make a decision. You do not want to jump on the first offer you get because the next one may be the to-die-for job. Give yourself a reasonable amount of time to make the best decision. Please note, I said "reasonable". An employer should be willing to give you a few days or up to a week to decide.

**In your letter of acceptance be sure to mention the exact position, the salary and the start date, if known.**

James Taylor  
44 Lyric Street  
St. Joseph, MO 64577

April 15, 2003

Mr. Jon Stewart  
Universal Publishers  
1000 Cedar Street  
Kansas City, MO 64888

Dear Mr. Stewart:

I am writing to confirm your offer to join Universal Publishers as a technical writer. I am pleased to have been selected and accept the position at an annual salary of \$30,000. I understand that my start date will be Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. . In the meantime, if you need any further information, you may contact me at 816.456.7777.

Thank you for your consideration over the past few weeks. I am looking forward to this new opportunity wit Universal Publishers.

Sincerely,

James Taylor

## LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

150 Farmington Avenue  
St. Joseph, MO 64500

April 15, 20XX

Mr. Paul Torrence  
Kahn Enterprises  
1931 W. Willow Drive  
Chicago, IL 00078

Dear Mr. Torrence:

I am writing to confirm my acceptance of the offer as a Media Relations Specialist at \$36,000. with Kahn Enterprises. As we discussed, I will begin on June 1<sup>st</sup> and will report to Mr. Harrison at 9:00 a.m. on that day.

I am very excited about this opportunity and look forward to being a member of your staff. Should you need additional information before my start date, please do not hesitate to contact me at 816.788.2200.

Thank you for your offer, and I will see you on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Sincerely,

Jason Tribbett

## LETTER OF REFUSAL

It is good manners to put into writing that you are declining an offer. Even if you decline over the telephone, follow up with a letter. You want to maintain a good relationship with the company because although you may not want this particular job, you may want to be considered for another position later.

721 Sutler Street  
St. Joseph, MO 64567

April 15, 20XX

Mr. Ronald Waterman  
Allied Communications, Inc.  
6 Front Street  
Kansas City, MO 64222

Dear Mr. Waterman:

Thank you for your consideration over the past few weeks. I was very impressed with your facility and operation. However, I have decided to decline your offer for the position of Production Manager.

Allied Communications, Inc. is an impressive company and a leader in the field of communications technology. I know you will continue to make great strides. Again, thank you for your time. It was a pleasure to meet you and the members of your team.

Sincerely,

Anne Finch

## **DECLINING AN OFFER**

64 State Street  
St. Joseph, MO 64509

April 15, 20XX

Mr. Charles Parker  
Silvan Promotions, Inc.  
421 Watson Place  
Kansas City, MO 64255

Dear Mr. Parker:

Thank you so much for offering me the position of Marketing Manager with Silvan Promotions, Inc.

Although it was a difficult choice for me, after careful consideration I decided that another offer was more compatible with my career goals.

I appreciate the time you spent with me. I hope that the candidate whom you select works out well for you.

Sincerely,

Maureen Collins

## LETTER OF RESIGNATION

**When leaving a job, you should tell your employer in person. Then, follow-up with a letter of resignation.**

5344 Hudson Street  
St. Joseph, MO 64545

April 15, 20XX

Mr. Fred Harvey, Manager  
Pizza Hut  
33 Main Street North  
Savannah, MO 64321

Dear Mr. Harvey:

I am writing to let you know that I will be resigning my position as Assistant Manager for Pizza Hut effective April 30<sup>th</sup>.

I have enjoyed the experience of working for Pizza Hut over the past four years and I especially appreciate your guidance and understanding while I completed my college degree. It has been a privilege to be associated with such a great team of employees.

Thank you for your support. It is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jane Ann Miller

## LETTER OF RESIGNATION 2

Mary Jo Schmidt  
78 Rockledge Avenue  
St. Joseph, MO 64543

April 15, 20XX

Ms. Constance Peterson  
Vice President for Corporate Communications  
Cass Industries  
1900 Spring Street  
Kansas City, MO 64145

Dear Ms. Peterson:

I regretfully wish to inform you that I will be resigning my position as Media Specialist at Cass Industries effective April 30, 20XX.

I have accepted the position as Director of Media Relations with Spangler, Inc. in Dallas, Texas.

My six years at Cass Industries have been gratifying and I will always remember them fondly. Please know that if I can be of any assistance to you, now or in the future, you may call on me anytime.

Thank you for all your support and guidance over the years. I will miss you.

Sincerely,

Margaret Cummings