



OFFICE OF
CAREER EDUCATION

Cover Letter Format

1681 5th Avenue | (304) 696-2370 | career@marshall.edu

Cover letters can be a chore to write but are extremely important in the job search process. Cover letters need to be tailored to the specific job for which you are applying. While it is okay to have a template that you work from, you cannot simply copy and paste that template and call it a day. Take the time to find out what the unique problems and challenges of the organization might be. Show them how you have the qualifications to meet their needs. Keep your letters personal, warm, and professional while remembering you are writing a professional document.

Date

John A. Smith
123 Third Street
Huntington, WV 25755

Use the same font and style on your cover letter as your resume for consistency and professionalism.

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

- Address to a specific person if possible. Call the company for a name if not listed. Use Mr. or Mrs.
- If a name is not available for the salutation, use a title. For example, Dear Human Resources Director, Hiring Manager, or Search Committee Chair.

Dear _____:

Paragraph 1: The "Hook"

- Get to the point: What is your purpose? What is the position? Who/What is your source?
- Drop a name. Did someone within the company suggest you apply? Let them know!
- Highlight something about their business or posting that made you want to apply.

Paragraph 2: The "Pitch"

- Highlight your relevant qualifications and results, putting the most important information first.
- Target what the organization needs or wants.
- Make it clear and easy to read. Be positive in your overall message.
- Talk about a relevant work experience that helps the company see what you would add to the position.
- Use buzzwords from the job description.

Paragraph 3: The "Close"

- Quick summary (one sentence).
- Call to action (request for a phone call or interview).
- Contact information.
- "Thank you."

Sincerely,

Your Name (First and last name typed)

- 4 spaces
- Include your signature, unless e-mailing

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Cover Letter Example

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Dear [name]:

With the utmost enthusiasm, I would like to express my interest in the [position title] position at [company name]. My interest in [field] has taken me from [experience] to [experience]. I believe that my passion for [aspect of your field or background], strong commitment to [aspect of your field or background], and interest in [aspect of your field or background] make me an ideal candidate to join the [department] staff at [company].

As a candidate, here's what I could immediately bring to the table:

- An effective [descriptor that reflects transferable skill #1]: In my role at [previous job], I [action or accomplishment]. I was also able to showcase my [skill] abilities as a [role] in [project name] project by [what you did].
- A disciplined [descriptor that reflects transferable skill #2]: I have always displayed my careful approach to [job duty] by [action]. At [previous company], I frequently [action]. In addition, I had the opportunity to [action or accomplishment], which further shows my dedication to [aspect of your field].
- A passionate [descriptor that reflects transferable skill #3]: Everything I have engaged in so far has all been driven by my keen interest in [aspect of your field]. Even as a [previous role], I made sure to dedicate some part of my day to [action]. It is this passion that has driven every one of my career decisions thus far.

I look forward to contributing my skills and experiences to the [position title] position at [company name] and hope to have the opportunity to speak with you further about how I can be an asset to your team. You may reach me by phone at (888) 123-4567 or by email at marshall@marshall.edu.

Sincerely,
[Your name]

Dear Ms. Smith:

Please accept my cover letter and resume as an application for the Pharmaceutical Sales Representative position, which was advertised on Handshake, Marshall University's employment website, on July 1, 2020. I am also writing at the suggestion of Bill Moyers, who recommended that I apply for the position.

As you will note from reviewing my resume, I have a BBA in Marketing and one year of outside sales experience, along with excellent communication and analytical skills. I am task oriented, diplomatic, and able to interact professionally and socially with individuals from all backgrounds. Through my performance, management style, and product knowledge at my current position, I have earned the recognition and respect from the upper management. I have become the company troubleshooter, frequently called to handle problem accounts that no one else seems to be able to save.

I feel that my education, experience, enthusiasm and persuasive ability are great assets to Merck Pharmaceuticals. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss my qualifications in detail. You may contact me at (304) 123-4567 or at marshall@marshall.edu. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Marco Marshall
Enclosure: Resume

Of course, you can (and should!) insert your personality, creativity, and knowledge of the company into your letter—but this framework is a helpful way to convey your most relevant transferable skills to the recruiter (making his or her job a whole lot easier). Do not bother walking through your entire career path and justifying every professional decision you have made. Do the hiring manager (and yourself) a favor, let your skills speak for themselves.

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