

EMPLOYMENT LETTERS- Tip Sheet

THE BASICS OF EMPLOYMENT LETTERS

Employment letters are important communication tools used in the job search process. In addition to demonstrating written communication skills, they serve to highlight interest and qualifications, clarify details, and show common courtesy to the employer. Typical correspondence includes the following:

- 1) Cover letter
 - a) Application letter
 - b) Prospecting letter
- 2) Thank you for the interview letter
- 3) Acceptance letter
- 4) Decline of offer letter

FORMAT:

- Use 8 ½” x 11” high quality (16-25 lb.) bond paper in white or off-white. Use the same type and color of paper on which your resume is printed. (Note exceptions in the “Thank you letter” section.)
- Use a 12-point font size (10-point minimum) and a basic, easily read font style such as Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, or Helvetica. Font size and style should also be consistent with the size and style used in your resume. (As noted in the “Thank you letter” section, in some circumstances this letter can be a handwritten note or email correspondence.)
- Print on a laser-quality printer.
- Use standard business format (full block, block, or modified block) and center the letter on the page. Use one-inch margins.
- Keep the letter to one page. The length and number of paragraphs will vary depending upon the type of letter being written.

CONTENT:

- Never delegate responsibility for your job search to anyone else. Do all the writing yourself and take responsibility for following up with employers.
- Address your letters to a specific individual with his or her correct title and business address.
- Be clear, concise, and positive.
- Vary your sentence structure. Avoid beginning every sentence with the word “I.”
- Produce an error-free, clean copy.
- Tailor your letters for each situation. Generic and mass-produced letters are unprofessional and easily spotted by the employer.
- Show appreciation to the employer for considering your application.
- Always keep your reader in mind. Make your letters easy to read and attractive. Don’t use slang.
- Be timely. Demonstrate that you know how to do business for yourself and, by implication, for others.
- Be honest. Always be able to back up your claims with evidence and specific examples from your experience.
- Your goal is to communicate that you are a responsible person with a positive attitude who knows how to operate in a professional environment.

COVER LETTERS

PURPOSE:

The cover letter is a marketing tool designed to introduce your resume to the reader. The goal of the cover letter and resume is to interest the employer enough to want to call you for an interview. It should express your interest, enthusiasm and, most importantly, your qualifications for the particular position to which you are applying. Therefore, it is necessary to write a tailored and unique cover letter to accompany each resume mailed or emailed to a potential employer.

A cover letter may take one of two forms:

- 1) An application letter, which is used in applying for a specific opening (example on page 4); or
- 2) A prospecting letter, which inquires about employment opportunities at an organization (example on page 5).

FORMAT:

- Follow suggestions in the “Format” section specified under “The Basics of Employment Letters.” Keep the letter to one page, three to four paragraphs in length.
- Please note that employers’ preferences may vary regarding the presentation of qualifications; some employers prefer a bulleted section, while others favor a paragraph as a demonstration of written communication skills.

CONTENT:

- Follow suggestions in the “Content” section specified under “The Basics of Employment Letters.”
- Tailor the letter for each position and organization. Present your unique qualifications for the position; express what makes you more qualified for the position than another potential candidate.
- Design your letters to be work-centered and employer-centered, not "me" centered. Focus on your skills, accomplishments, and experiences (what you can do as opposed to who you are). Your letters are marketing tools that should address the needs of employers and motivate them to learn more about you.
- Research the organization and weave information regarding the organization or industry into the letter.
- Have someone else, in addition to yourself, proofread your cover letter and resume for spelling and grammatical errors.

EXAMPLES:

The following page outlines the basic structure of a cover letter, followed by sample application and prospecting letters.

COVER LETTER STRUCTURE (*Use 1" margins*):

Your Street Number and Address

City, State Zip Code

Telephone Number (*This is a good time to update your voice message to a professional one.*)

**A reliable email address can be used in addition to your phone number.*

Month Day, Year

Name of Person You are Writing

Job Title of Person You are Writing

Name of Organization

Street Number and Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. (Recruiter's last name): (*Follow the salutation by a colon, not a comma.*)

First Paragraph: In your initial paragraph, state the reason for the letter, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying, and indicate from which resource (Career and Professional Development Center, internet, news media, friend, mutual acquaintance) you learned of the opportunity. You may want to bold or otherwise highlight the title of the position.

Second and Third Paragraphs: The second and perhaps third paragraph(s) should highlight your strongest qualifications that match the position requirements. Find out how the organization has been performing, how it ranks within the industry, and what current trends affect that industry. Use that information or the job description to then indicate why you are interested in the position, the organization, its products, or services. **Above all, identify what you can do for the employer.** Note how your academic studies (specify your degree), projects, work and internship experiences, volunteer activities, extracurricular background, and career aspirations relate to the organization's interests and goals. As much as possible, provide evidence of your related experiences and accomplishments. **Refer to your attached/enclosed resume, but try not to exactly repeat the same information the reader will find in the resume.**

Closing paragraph: In the final paragraph, refer the reader to the attached/enclosed resume or application (which summarizes your qualifications, training, experiences) and any other materials (i.e. reference list or written references, writing or work samples, portions of portfolio) you may be utilizing to present yourself. Indicate your desire for a personal interview using one of three approaches:

1. **Active Approach** - Indicate to the employer that you will call within a certain period of time (usually 7 days) to discuss the position further or arrange a convenient time for an interview. Use tact, and be sure to follow up in the time period specified, or you will lose your credibility.
2. **Reserved Approach** - State your phone number and email address and express your desire for the employer to contact you. Feel free to contact the employer in 10-14 days to express your continued interest in the organization, and to ask where they are in the review process.
3. **Long Distance Job Search Approach** - Mention the fact that you will be in the area during a certain time period and will call to arrange an interview before you arrive. You may request a specific time and date for an interview or indicate your availability at any time during a given period.

Finally, conclude your letter by thanking the employer for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your signature (When mailing or providing a paper copy, include your handwritten signature.)

Your Typed Name (name should be typed four spaces below the closing, 'Sincerely')

Attachment(s) (to indicate that you have attached a resume or other relevant documents)

COVER LETTER: SAMPLE APPLICATION LETTER

The application letter is used when applying for a specific posted position.

123 Money Way
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
(412) 345-6789

August 25, 2019

Ms. Cheryl P. Auditan
Manager, Human Resources
ABC Accounting Firm
456 Audit Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15255

Dear Ms. Auditan:

In response to the August 24 posting on the Robert Morris University Handshake website, I am applying for the position of **Tax Intern** with **ABC Accounting Firm**.

As a senior Accounting major (GPA 3.6) at Robert Morris University (RMU), I have gained internship experience in bank reconciliations and payroll taxes. In addition, I will have completed all of my accounting courses, including Taxes I and II, by the end of this semester.

My role as Vice President of the RMU Association of Future Accountants has given me the opportunity to plan and participate in several programs about the field of public accounting. Mr. Andrews from ABC Accounting Firm presented a program last week regarding the implications of the recent public accounting events on mid-sized firms. I was impressed by ABC's proactive approach to these events and have targeted your firm for both my internship and full-time career experiences.

Attached you will find my resume and transcript. I also completed the online application on the ABC Accounting Firm website. If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach me at (412) 345-6789 or at amyjones@mail.rmu.edu. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future to discuss this exciting opportunity. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Jones (When mailing or providing a paper copy, include your handwritten signature.)

Amy Jones

Attachments

COVER LETTER: SAMPLE PROSPECTING LETTER

The prospecting letter is used when sending an inquiry regarding employment opportunities that may be available at an organization in the field that you are considering. Since you will not be responding to a specific position, the first paragraph should indicate your interest in the organization and how you learned about it. As with the application letter, the second and possibly third paragraph(s) of the prospecting letter should outline your strongest qualifications. Researching the organization and your career of interest will help you identify the skill sets that would be of particular interest to the potential employer.

4567 Attitude Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15288
(412) 345-6789
snetworker@msn.org

September 3, 2019

Mr. Thomas R. Moneymaker
Vice President – Sales Division
DEF Corporation
789 Pharm Boulevard
Atlanta, GA 19999

Dear Mr. Moneymaker:

I recently read DEF Corporation's organization description in *The Pittsburgh Business Times*. My follow-up research of your company website greatly interested me, and I would like to inquire about employment opportunities in your Pharmaceutical Sales Training Program.

Based upon my research of the pharmaceutical sales field, I believe I would excel in this field with DEF for the following reasons:

- Proven track record of accomplishment in both **retail and inside sales**,
- B.S. in Business Administration with a **Marketing Concentration** from Robert Morris University,
- **Knowledge of the medical industry** acquired through internship experiences in both a hospital and an insurance organization.

My experience, outgoing and determined personality, and ability to learn difficult concepts quickly would all be assets in a successful pharmaceutical sales career with DEF Corporation. As I read in the July 25 *Wall Street Journal*, your recent introduction of Migrainaway into the marketplace is sure to be a blockbuster. I would be excited about the opportunity to market this product as well as the other reputable pharmaceuticals that have made DEF a leader in the industry.

I will be in the Atlanta area from November 21 through November 30. I will contact you next week to set up a time when we can meet to discuss in more detail how my qualifications can best meet your needs. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Sally Networker (When mailing or providing a paper copy, include your handwritten signature.)

Sally Networker

THANK YOU LETTERS

PURPOSE

The thank you letter is used to state your appreciation for the meeting or interview. It also demonstrates your social skills and gives you the opportunity to reaffirm your interest and qualifications for the position. Most employers expect a thank you letter, and may consider it unprofessional if they do not receive one. It may also give you a competitive edge if other candidates with similar qualifications do not send this follow-up letter.

FORMAT

- Follow suggestions in the “Format” section specified under “The Basics of Employment Letters.” Keep the letter to one page, three to four paragraphs in length.
- Thank you’s can be a typewritten letter in business format, email correspondence or a handwritten note. Tailor the way you send your letter to the culture of the organization and the interviewer(s) with whom you met.

CONTENT

- Follow suggestions in the “Content” section specified under “The Basics of Employment Letters.”
- Express your appreciation for the interview and reconfirm your interest in the organization and position.
- Restate points of particular interest discussed during the interview.
- If necessary, include information omitted during the interview that may be pertinent in considering your application for employment.
- Refer to and/or include any additional requirements mentioned during the interview (i.e. online or paper application).
- Send a thank you letter to everyone with whom you have met, varying the content slightly to the specific individual.
- Send a thank-you email the same day as the interview. Some employers may narrow the candidate pool the same day as the interviews. If you would then like to send a handwritten thank-you note, mail it within 24-48 hours after the meeting or interview. If you choose to send both, vary the content slightly.

THANK YOU LETTER: SAMPLE

123 Money Way
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
(412) 345-6789

September 5, 2019

Ms. Cheryl P. Auditan
Manager, Human Resources
ABC Accounting Firm
456 Audit Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15255

Dear Ms. Auditan:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me yesterday to discuss the audit position at ABC Accounting Firm. I enjoyed meeting with you and the members of your department and am excited about the possibility of applying my education and experience as a contributing member of your team.

As you highlighted the need for someone with technical as well as communication and customer service skills, I was even more convinced of the excellent match this position is to my background. Both my accounting coursework and my internship with XYZ Accounting Firm have given me the technical background to hit the ground running in this audit position. My part-time jobs in waitressing and retail sales have made me aware of the importance of customer service to an organization's success; further, they have provided me with an opportunity to work with a broad range of people and develop strong problem resolution skills.

As you instructed, I have completed the online application on your website. Also, attached is the paper application that you asked me to complete.

If I can provide you with any additional information, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Amy Jones (When mailing or providing a paper copy, include your handwritten signature.)

Amy Jones

Attachment

ACCEPTANCE LETTERS

PURPOSE

The letter of acceptance is used to confirm acceptance of a job offer. It is important to send this formal acceptance letter even if you have verbally accepted a job offer. State in writing your understanding of the offer and any other terms of employment. Although it is not a legal document, it is beneficial to have your understanding of the terms in writing. (It is also a good idea to have the employer send you a letter with the details of the offer.)

FORMAT

- Follow suggestions in the “Format” section specified under “The Basics of Employment Letters.” Keep the letter to one page, three to four paragraphs in length.
- Letters should be typewritten in business format.

CONTENT

- Follow suggestions in the “Content” section specified under “The Basics of Employment Letters.”
- Express your appreciation for the offer and state your enthusiasm for the position.
- Confirm particulars of the terms of employment, including but not limited to starting date, salary, benefits, and training.

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE: SAMPLE

Your Street Number and Address
City, State Zip Code
Telephone Number

Month Day, Year

Name of Person You are Writing
Job Title of Person You are Writing
Name of Organization
Street Number and Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. (Recruiter's last name):

As a follow-up to our telephone conversation on September 10, I am pleased to accept your offer of employment as a (position title). It is my understanding that my starting date is October 1, with an annual starting salary of \$36,500.

Thank you for the opportunity to join your organization. I look forward to becoming a contributing member of your excellent team.

Sincerely,

Your signature (When mailing or providing a paper copy, include your handwritten signature.)

Your Typed Name

DECLINE OF OFFER LETTERS

PURPOSE

The decline of offer letter is written when a decision has been made not to accept an offer of employment. It is written to establish closure to the employment offer and to maintain a positive relationship with the organization and the interviewer. This letter is important as a professional courtesy and to keep the doors open for future employment.

FORMAT

- Follow suggestions in the “Format” section specified under “The Basics of Employment Letters.” Keep the letter to one page, three to four paragraphs in length.
- Letters should be typewritten in business format.

CONTENT

- Follow suggestions in the “Content” section specified under “The Basics of Employment Letters.”
- State your decision to decline the offer.
- Express your appreciation for the offer and the potential employer’s time and interest in you.
- Express the difficulty of your decision, and your positive impression of the interviewer and the organization.

DECLINE OF OFFER: SAMPLE

Your Street Number and Address
City, State Zip Code
Telephone Number

Month Day, Year

Name of Person You are Writing
Job Title of Person You are Writing
Name of Organization
Street Number and Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. (Recruiter's last name):

After careful consideration of the employment offer made by XYZ Corporation, I must respectfully decline the opportunity to work for your organization at this time.

The decision has been a difficult one, and I want to extend my gratitude for your interest in me, and the time you have allowed me to reach my decision. I respect the professionalism shown by you and the other members of your staff.

Thank you again for your consideration and courtesy.

Sincerely,

Your signature (When mailing or providing a paper copy, include your handwritten signature.)

Your Typed Name