

Cover Letters

Things to think about first:

- ▶ What does the organization do?
- ▶ What will the person do in the advertised position?
- ▶ What skills will the position require?
- ▶ What have you done that fits those requirements?
- ▶ Why should they hire you, rather than someone else?

Format Guidelines

- ▶ Standard business letter format and font, one page, single spaced
- ▶ **Salutation:** Address to a person, if possible. (next best: Dear Hiring Manager, Dear Editorial Team, etc.)
- ▶ **Opening paragraph:** make a connection and get to the point: what you are applying for and why you should be considered. If you have already made a connection with them, refer to it.
- ▶ **Middle paragraphs:** 1-3 paragraphs that highlight your qualifications. Consider using each paragraph to highlight a different aspect of your experience or background, and how it fits their needs.
- ▶ **Last paragraph:** brief closing; can indicate future action, or contact.
- ▶ **Closing:** Formal (Sincerely,) unless you know the person well.

Review content with these in mind:

- ▶ They want to know what you can do for them (not what you hope to get from the job)
- ▶ Highlight only aspects of the resume relevant to the position
- ▶ Show how what you've done fits the position (check the ad)
- ▶ Show how you are good fit for their organization (do it by giving examples and evidence, don't just assert it).

Style

- ▶ Use a professional tone (don't gush). Don't use contractions.
- ▶ Use assertive prose (avoid "I believe" "I feel")
- ▶ Be specific—avoid formulaic or generic statements.
- ▶ Avoid cliches
- ▶ Be brief—usually no more than 3 sentences per paragraph
- ▶ Proofread it. Have someone else proofread it too.

How might this be improved?

Ms. Rita Recruiter
Head Marketing Coordinator
ABC Non-Profit Foundation

Dear Ms. Recruiter,

I am thrilled to hear about the opportunity with ABC Non-Profit Foundation as a Marketing Manager within the Communications and Marketing department. I believe that my experiences and skills fit the position well and that my personality and experience would be a good match for the outside-the-box thinking and dedication to making a difference for which your organization is known.

A suggested edit, with the same content

I am thrilled to hear about the opportunity with ABC Non-Profit Foundation as a Marketing Manager within the Communications and Marketing department. I believe that my experiences and skills fit the position well and that my personality and experience would be a good match for the outside-the-box thinking and dedication to making a difference for which your organization is known.

I am excited to learn of your Marketing Manager position within the Communcations and Marketing Department. I have professional experience in both communications and marketing, and I share ABC Foundation's commitment to making a difference in social justice/sustainability/whatever (be specific). I would like to put my skills to work to help ABS foundation reach a broader audience/enhance its revenue/whatever (be specific).