

Cover Letter Writing 101

PURPOSE: To convince the employer that you are a **“Good Fit”** for the position so they want to talk to you. Ultimately, they will want to hear more about your skills and interest in the position.

THE BIG CHALLENGE

I already wrote my resume and it is great! So, what do I need to tell them that I have not already told them?

THE MISTAKE

People simply rewrite everything on their resume in the form of a letter.

WHERE IS THE VALUE IN THIS?

REFOCUS

- Your resume is all about YOU and YOUR experiences.
- Think of the cover letter as a document about THEM (the employer)!

WAIT WHAT? HOW DO I DO THAT?

Review the job description carefully and select the **Top 2-3 Skills** needed to be successful in the role. Next, tell the employer about how you have those skills and the experiences you have had to develop them. If you do not have all 3 skills, consider selecting a different skill they are looking for that you have.

CONTENT OUTLINE

1. Opening Paragraph- Get the employer’s attention. Show your initiative, and what you have learned about the company that makes it attractive to you. Identify what position you are applying for and how you learned about the position. If you have been referred to the position by someone in your network, include that information here.
2. Skill A- Teamwork- Tell the employer about how you have this skill and where you acquired it. You need to give EVIDENCE to support your claims. Similar to an interview where you would elaborate on a strength.
3. Skill B
4. Skill C
5. Closing Paragraph- Reiterate interest and provide a summary of the skills you listed above that make you a good fit for “X” position. Indicate a willingness to supply the employer with additional information. Lastly, thank them for reviewing your application.

OTHER TIPS

- ✓ Incorporate part of the Company’s Mission and/or Values
- ✓ Build a Bridge
 - In some cases, it may not be obvious that you are a good fit, for example you have a degree in Mechanical, but you are applying for Software Engineer job. This is your opportunity to “Build a Bridge” for the employer sharing with them why you are a good fit.

Cover Letters: Utilizing the Job Description

When writing your cover letter, it is important to relate your skills and knowledge to the position for which you're applying. What related experiences can you emphasize to show a connection between your abilities and the position? Also, think about developing your cover letter from the employer's perspective. If roles were reversed and you were hiring for this position, would you consider yourself a strong candidate qualified for an interview? In short, have you sold yourself on paper and linked your experiences to what is asked within the job description and desired qualifications?

The following position was posted on Handshake, the University of Iowa's online job and internship database. The underlined text illustrates where the applicant intends to detail their experiences that connect to that particular job task or desired skill. The following cover letter will demonstrate how the applicant relates their experiences to the job description.

Job Posting

Job Title: Sales Account Executive
(Full-time)

Organization: KWKB-TV

Location: Iowa City, Cedar Rapids,
Waterloo, IA

Industry: Media/Broadcast; Communication;
Television; Sales

Description

KWKB CW 20 has an immediate opening for a highly motivated Account Executive. The primary responsibility of our Account Executives is to sell commercial advertising time and other station products to local advertisers and/or advertising agencies. KWKB programming includes America's Next Top Model, Gossip Girl, and Vampire Diaries. This is a tremendous opportunity for a highly motivated individual to join a progressive company.

Responsibilities

- Generate revenue for station by retaining current business and developing new business
- Contact local advertising agencies and direct advertisers
- Attract advertisers to sell products and services via broadcast television
- Make sales presentations to all classifications of advertisers to obtain orders for advertising time and use of commercial production facilities
- Attain budgeted revenue goals through effective solicitations and promotions

Desired Skills

- Strong planning and organizational skills
- Proficient in MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Previous media sales experience a plus, other sales experience preferred
- Must be accountable and reliable

Sample Cover Letter

Ryan Kennedy

123 Market St, Iowa City, IA 52242
(515) 234-5678; ryan-kennedy@uiowa.edu

March 22, 20XX

Joy Anderson
Senior Account Executive
KWKB-TV
501 1st Avenue
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

Dear Ms. Anderson:

I am writing to express interest in the Sales Account Executive position posted on the KWKB-TV website. I am excited to work for one of the region's most recognized and accomplished television stations and would like to be considered as a candidate for this position.

As my resume indicates, I am currently the Advertising Manager for The Daily Iowa (*DI*), the University of Iowa's student newspaper. In my position, I manage the accounts of more than 200 businesses that choose to advertise in the DI. Through working with a variety of companies in the Iowa City area, I understand the importance of cultivating customer relationships through personal contacts, and I am devoted to providing clients the best experience possible. I also have experience with creating promotions to generate revenue. For example, I developed a "Buy Two Ads, Get One Free" promotion that I presented to local businesses to encourage them to advertise in special editions of the DI that were distributed during summer orientation programs. This promotion increased summer ad sales of 35%. I pride myself on being dedicated to my work and not afraid to take on challenges.

In addition to my advertising knowledge, I also possess several years of retail experience. As the Assistant Manager of a large retail chain, I have learned to be organized, efficient, and accountable. Through this experience, I understand how providing quality customer service is vital to repeat business.

My experiences have given me an understanding of the advertising sales industry and make me a competitive candidate for the Sales Account Executive position. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this position in detail. Please feel free to contact me should you need additional information. Thank you for reviewing my materials. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Ryan Kennedy

Ryan Kennedy

Please note: The underlined text illustrates the direct connections to the job description the applicant made when writing their cover letter. Do not underline in your actual cover letter—this is intended for learning purposes only.