

THE ART OF WRITING by William J. Banis JOB-SEARCH LETTERS

Perhaps one of the most confusing aspects of finding a job that you'll face is writing appropriate job-search letters. Letters can enhance your employability, and every letter should be considered carefully. Generic, impersonal letters simply don't work. It's important that you craft your letters to reflect what is appropriate for your audience, your objectives, and the requirements of the situation.

COVER LETTER

Demonstrate that your qualifications fit the requirements of the position. Study the position description carefully and decide on one or more themes—education, experience, interests, and so forth—that show how well you fit the position. Link major job dimensions with your related past performance and experience.



COVER LETTER

1225 Beltrami Ave.
Bemidji, MN 56601

March 14, 20XX

Ms. Mary Lou Nelson
Manager of Human Resources
Continental Industries, Inc.
2900 Rosemont Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Dear Ms. Nelson:

I am applying for the staff accountant position that was posted on Bemidji State University's site this week. The position seems to fit very well with my education, experience, and career interests.

Your position requires skills in various accounting functions, including performing general ledger reconciliations, analysis, and reporting; ensuring the completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of the general ledger and internal monthly and quarterly statement; and making certain of the accuracy and timeliness of various reconciliations. In my experience as a junior accountant, accounting intern, and billing coordinator, I handled monthly journal entries, analyzed expenses, reviewed and corrected accounting entries, and generated reports. Accounting corrections I made as an intern revealed nearly \$50,000 in unpaid bills and mislaid funds. My enclosed resume provides more details on my qualifications.

My background and career goals seem to match your job requirements well. I am confident that I can perform the job effectively. Furthermore, I am genuinely interested in the position and in working for Continental Industries, Inc. Your firm has an excellent reputation and comes highly recommended to me.

Would you please consider my request for a personal interview to discuss my qualifications and to learn more about this opportunity? I shall call you next week to see if a meeting can be arranged. Should you need to reach me, please feel free to contact me at 218/555-5555 or bbeaver@live.bemidjistate.edu.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Bucky Beaver

Bucky Beaver

Structure your application letters with 3 or 4 paragraphs:

- Come to the point. Reveal your purpose and interest. Identify the position and your source of information. Introduce your themes.
- Outline your strongest qualifications that match the position requirements based on the themes you selected. As much as possible, provide evidence of your related experiences and accomplishments. Refer to your enclosed resume.
- Suggest an action plan. Request an interview, and indicate that you will call during a specific time period to discuss interview possibilities.
- Express appreciation to the reader for his or her time and consideration.

DEFINE YOURSELF

Clarifying your career direction and articulating your value to employers will make an effective letter. Ideally, your letters should flow from, and be linked to, the following career-development tasks:

- Assessing your abilities, skills, knowledge, interests, preferences, values, and motivations
- Researching and evaluating occupations, jobs, and employers
- Defining your work objectives and career goals
- Writing a professional-level resume
- Planning and implementing your job-search campaign
- Interviewing for job opportunities
- Choosing appropriate work.

WRITING STYLE

After researching the position and company, you can then compose your letters to show how your background and talents can meet the reader's needs; convince the reader of your value as a prospective employee; and persuade the reader to take action in your favor.

You and your situation are unique; strive to allow your individuality to be expressed through your writing. A key point to remember is that responsibility for effective communication rests with the writer, not with the reader. The information applies to both paper (hard copy) and e-mail letters.

PROSPECTING LETTER

The purposes of this letter are to prospect for possible vacancies, get your resume read, and generate interviews. Target specific individuals in specific organizations. Structure this letter similarly to the cover letter, but instead of using specific position information, focus on broader occupational and/or organizational dimensions to describe how your qualifications match the work environment.

- Indicate your interest and reveal your source of information.
- Outline your strongest qualifications—focus on broader occupational and/or organizational dimensions to describe how your qualifications match the work environment.
- Convince the employer that you have the personal qualities and motivation to contribute to the organization.
- Suggest an action plan. Request an interview, and indicate that you will call during a specific time period to discuss interview possibilities.
- Express appreciation to the reader for his or her time and consideration.

1225 Beltrami Ave.
Bemidji, MN 56601

September 12, 20XX

Peter Jones
Director of Business Development
Rural Renewable Energy Alliance
1000 Commerce Lane
Pine River, MN 56617

Dear Mr. Jones:

After researching a number of organizations for summer internships in the field of marketing, I was especially impressed with what I have read about Rural Renewable Energy Alliance and its mission to work directly with small businesses to increase visibility in the marketplace while creating an environment where they can compete with larger and more established firms.

In May, I will be completing my junior year at the Bemidji State University and am majoring in Business Administration with an emphasis in marketing. I have a strong interest in business and management issues with a specific interest in the area of marketing. When I researched potential internship sites, Rural Renewable Energy Alliance emerged as having a strong marketing presence, excellent training programs and a reputation for great customer service. I hope to contribute my passion, customer service skills and recent classroom knowledge to Rural Renewable Energy Alliance marketing department.

Enclosed is my resume offering a summary of my educational background, and recent work experience. As indicated on my resume, I have gained marketing experience through my part-time position in the Office of Admissions. In this role, I've developed an ease for speaking in front of large groups, assisted with social media marketing, directed mail campaigns, and showcased campus events to prospective students and families.

I am genuinely interested in working for Rural Renewable Energy Alliance. I would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss the possibility of an internship with Rural Renewable Energy Alliance during a follow-up phone call next week. You can also contact me at bbeaver@live.bemidjistate.edu or (218)755-2038.

Sincerely,

Bucky Beaver

Bucky Beaver

PROSPECTING LETTER

