

# CREATING A COVER LETTER

## Are cover letters necessary?

The increasing popularity of e-mailed, Web-based, and faxed resumes have people wondering if cover letters remain a relevant tool in today's job search. Generally, a cover letter should accompany *each* resume. The cover letter allows you to demonstrate your ability to write and offers the first statement of why you should be hired.

## What is the best way to e-mail a cover letter?

If an employer requests that you send your cover letter and resume via e-mail, cut and paste both into the body of your e-mail message (N.B., this will eliminate formatting). In addition, attach your cover letter and resume to the email (use either Microsoft Word or Adobe document format). This will ensure that, should your email attachments not be viewable for any reason, the employer can still view your documents in the email body.

*Whenever possible, cite a specific person. It may take research to learn the contact's name, correct spelling and title.*

*If uncertain whether "Mrs." or "Miss" is preferred, use "Ms." Instead.*

*Tailor your letter to the position description and the employer's needs. Focus on strengths that define you as a candidate.*

*Remember to sign your name here.*

**YOUR NAME**  
Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Phone Number  
E-mail Address

Date

Full Name  
Formal Title  
Company Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Ms./Mr. Name:

OPENING PARAGRAPH: State that you are applying for a specific position and how you learned of the position, using a contact name when possible. Personalize the letter by saying why you want to work for this organization.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S): Succinctly outline the qualifications that make you a strong candidate. Relate your qualifications to the needs of the current job opening. Specific examples can demonstrate your skills and experiences.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Discuss your next action step. Repeat your interest in the position and indicate when you will contact the employer to follow up. Thank the employer for reviewing your resume.

Sincerely,

Your Name (Typed)

*Use the same heading that you use for your resume.*

*Use a colon here.*

*Conduct a spell check and review your cover letter carefully for errors.*

*A cover letter should almost always run less than a page in length. (Only the most extremely technical positions may require more.)*

*Choose quality paper that matches your resume.*

Adapted from San Diego State University Career Services



## San Francisco State University Career Center

1600 Holloway Avenue, Student Services Building 206, San Francisco CA 94132  
Tel: 415/338-1764 • Fax: 415/338-2979 • careerct@sfsu.edu • www.sfsu.edu/~career

### Sample Internship Description:

**Event Planning Intern:** The intern works with the Director to plan and execute events and educational programs. Responsibilities include arranging facilities and catering, promoting events to members and to the community, coordinating with speakers and panel experts, and compiling event evaluations. Duties will be approximately 70% project oriented and 30% clerical. Office duties include working with an organizational database, completing mailing to members, and providing general assistance.

### Sample Position Description:

**Sales and Marketing Assistant:** Use your leadership and excellent communication skills to serve our valued clients. Recruit, interview, market and build current and prospective client relationships. Tap into your sales potential, outstanding recruitment knowledge and superb account management skills when placing our contract employees. With dedication and hard work, you can move up the corporate ladder and advance into a leadership position. Visit our website at [www.hightechfirm.com](http://www.hightechfirm.com). Send all correspondence to Sally J. Harris, HR Director, High-Tech Firm, 3030 Build St., Suite 2301, Boston, MA 06045.

#### Carina Career

ccareer@sfsu.edu • 123 Campanile Drive • San Francisco, CA 94110 • 415/555.5555

September 16, 2009

Mr. Michael G. Smith  
The San Francisco Foundation  
225 Bush Street, Suite 500  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Dear Mr. Smith:

The San Francisco Foundation recently posted a listing for an Event Planning Intern on its Web site. After reviewing the requirements for the position and learning more about your organization, I am very interested in applying for this internship.

As a junior Communications major at San Francisco State University, I possess many of the skills that you require for this internship. Last year, I volunteered on SFSU's Social Issues Conference committee, which provided me with excellent experience in planning a complex event. I assisted with scheduling rooms, ordering catering, working with outside vendors, as well as helping our keynote speaker with his travel arrangements and other needs.

In addition to possessing knowledge and experience related to event planning, I would bring excellent clerical skills to The San Francisco Foundation. For the past three years, I have worked at the front desk of the Registrar's office. In this position, I assist the SFSU community and am trusted to enter confidential and detailed information in the master database.

Thank you for considering my application. I would bring a strong work ethic and a genuine interest in event planning to your organization. I will call you next week to discuss the possibility of an interview to further discuss my qualifications. If you have any questions, please contact me at 415/555.5555.

Sincerely,

*Carina Career*

Carina Career

#### JOSEPH CAREER

1234 Montezuma Drive  
San Francisco, CA 94115  
(415) 555-5555  
jcareer@sfsu.edu

September 16, 2009

Ms. Sally J. Harris  
Human Resources Director  
High-Tech Firm  
3030 Build Square, Suite 2301  
Boston, MA 06045

Dear Ms. Harris:

I am writing to apply for the Sales and Marketing Assistant position that High-Techfirm posted with the SFSU Career Center. Paula McLain, and associate at your firm and a recent SFSU graduate, has encouraged me to apply.

Your advertisement states that hard-working individuals with excellent communication and organizational skills are the best candidates for this position. I am a hard worker with the education and internship experience needed to work effectively with your clients. As an intern with Go-Med, a high-tech medical supply company, I assessed client needs and promoted product lines. I learned the value of asking questions and listening to learn what clients want from a service provider.

I combine effective communication with strong organizational skills. Over the last four years, I have developed excellent time-management practices by balancing the demands of part-time work, school, internships, and volunteer service. I look forward to applying all these skills in working as a sales assistant for your firm.

I would like to discuss how I might meet your needs in filling this position. I can be reached at (415) 555-5555 to arrange an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Joseph J. Career*

Joseph J. Career

*Adapted from San Diego State University Career Services*



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