

## Cover Letter Best Practices

Well-crafted cover letters, while not required, can influence your chances of securing an interview! If you need help getting started, Live Career has example letters/templates, so you can evaluate different ones. Keep in mind that the company already has your resume, so use your letter to demonstrate your interest, key qualifications, refute potential candidate concerns/red flags, provide examples of your work, and showcase a little of your personality.

### □ ***Include Quality Content & Structure Effectively***

Consider these 4-5 segments in your letter. First, provide a quick introduction and explain why you are interested in that role. You can include some information about what you know of the company and how your values and skills align with their mission and work. Second, include a concise and customized elevator pitch; i.e. relevant information about what you have done in the past based on their qualifications. Third, refute any potential concerns they might have about you as a candidate. Fourth, provide examples of work or URLs to online profiles (i.e. LinkedIn). Lastly, wrap up by including contact information, interview availability and a “call to action,” such as an interview request.

### □ ***Make It Memorable/Unique***

A manager does not need to read an average, run-of-the-mill cover letter that simply reiterates a resume. Use your letter to give insight on who you are, why you’re relevant and unique, why you’re excited about the role, a few differentiators or candidate selling points, and a gauge of some of your personality traits.

### □ ***Show Knowledge of the Company***

One of the main reasons candidates are ruled out is a “perceived lack of interest,” which can be the result of minimal knowledge of a company. To set yourself apart, show that you have done research on the company and highlight what stood out that triggered your interest in them. Doing this shows that you are applying for the position because you want to work for the company itself, not just because you saw a job opening available.

### □ ***Communicate the Value You’d Provide***

How will you benefit the company? Many make the mistake of talking about how working for the company will benefit them. Most Managers, however, are looking to determine the value you’d provide their team and organization. Discuss ways in which you would be a contributor. Share your accomplishments and examples of work that you have done that are relevant to what the Manager is trying to achieve!

### □ ***Impress with Your Writing Skills***

A growing trend in hiring candidates is that Managers want quality business acumen and communication skills. Therefore, view your cover letter as a sample writing piece and make sure you spellcheck and review twice, even read it out loud, to minimize errors. Do Quality Assurance on all important written products you’re submitting!

### □ ***Engage in Candidate “Risk Management”***

Put yourself in the shoes of a hiring Manager and ask yourself “Why might I not get selected for an interview? Am I missing a key skill? Do I have a lot of short-term contracts? Do I have a large gap? Am I too junior?” Address and mitigate those concerns via your cover letter. For example, if you are missing a skill, communicate your interest in working with it and what your ‘Training/Ramp-Up Plan’ might be. This approach not only addresses the concerns, but shows your interest, commitment, initiative, and motivation!

### □ ***Keep It Short and Sweet***

Be as concise as possible while providing the reviewer a picture of who you are and why you are a strong fit for the position. We recommend a half page or less.

***Example Cover Letter – Junior Laboratory Technician Role:***

After reviewing the Junior Laboratory Technician role you have, and learning about your organization, I am eager to pursue your opening! I have a Master's degree in Chemistry, was President of my Student Chemist Association and am a member of our local American Chemical Society. I've also completed two 6-month internships focused on wet chemistry analysis, method validation, root cause analysis, and finished product analysis in a chemistry lab. I'm very proficient with FTIR, NIRS, UPLC, NIR, and GC/MS.

While I don't have experience with nuclear magnetic resonance, I would be happy to engage in additional training on the topic prior to starting, and I'm excited about the prospect of learning and performing that task!

I am available for a phone interview with a one day notice, and could do an in person interview within two days.

I look forward to meeting you!

John Jones

***Example Cover Letter 2 – Project Manager Role:***

To whom it may concern,

I was very excited to see the Senior Project Manager role you have available via Indeed! A summary of my relevant qualifications are below. Your organization seems to align with my background and what I'm looking for, an established PMO utilizing Agile practices that focuses on continuous evolution. My schedule is flexible on Thursday and Friday afternoons, and I look forward to the opportunity to interview and learn more about this role!

**Relevant Experience**

- 10+ years of project management
- 3+ years of Agile experience, including involvement in two Waterfall to Agile transformations
- Hands-on experience with all tools listed, including MS Project and Visio
- Managed diverse, cross-functional development teams of 10-14 individuals
- Involved in full SDLC of new application builds
- Managed budgets of \$10-25 million
- Worked in two healthcare environments
- While I don't currently have a PMP, I'm in the middle of PMP boot camp class and I'm scheduled to take the exam in September
- 

You can see several recommendations of my work via my LinkedIn, at [www.linkedin.com/theprojectmanager](http://www.linkedin.com/theprojectmanager).

Thank you for your consideration,  
Jill Smith