

How to write your cover letter



The cover letter is a very important element, just as important as a well structured CV. Therefore, it must be very well written and specifically targeted to your future employer. In general your cover letter should be no longer than 1 page and be structured in the following way.

Structure

1. Opening paragraph.
 - Make sure you attract the attention of the reader right from the start!
 - Don't make the reader guess what you are asking for; be specific: you want an internship. Also state when you are available.
2. Why do you want to work with this company? Examples:
 - The company is market leader
 - Interesting corporate culture, mission, etc.
3. Why do you want to do this specific internship?
 - Get some important elements from the internship description which you think are interesting and link those to your own competences/previous experiences/things you want to learn in the future.
4. Why should they pick me?
 - Reflect your attitude, personality, motivation, enthusiasm, and communication skills.
 - Pay attention to elements of your background – education, leadership, experience – that are relevant to a position you are seeking.
 - Be as specific as possible, by using examples.
5. Closing paragraph
 - Make sure your last paragraph is just as striking as your first one!
 - Do not forget to ask for an opportunity for an interview.
 - Thank the reader for taking you into consideration.

In general parts 2,3 and 4 should be of about the same length.

Top 8 mistakes made

At our Integrand office we come across a lot of cover letters. In order to prevent you from making the same mistakes as a lot of other students we name here our top 8 mistakes made.

1. Cover letter just represents a written CV
Make sure that this letter is about your motivation for this company and internship. Do not repeat too much information which is already in your CV, since
2. Structure
Have a clear structure throughout your cover letter (see previous section).
3. Spelling errors
Make sure that you (and perhaps one of your friends) spell check your entire CV and cover letter.

4. Cover letter too long
Your letter should not exceed 1 page!
5. Markup
Make sure your letter has a neat markup. Alignment should be justified. Make sure you use a consistent font, font size and line spacing. Do not type your letter in Comic Sans!
6. Repetitions
You just have one page, make sure you use this space wisely and do not repeat yourself
7. Do not start your letter with 'I...'
8. Too many paragraphs
Make sure you stick to the structure and do not have more than 5-6 paragraphs

On the next page, you will find an example to help you out even more with writing your cover letter. Good luck writing yours! In the meantime, if you have any questions do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards,

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Bastille, room 314
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Example

3 March, 2010



Company X
Brink 1
1234 AA Amsterdam

Dear Mr. Janssen,

To be the best, one needs to learn from the best and Company X's sustained success in this highly competitive field is exemplary. For this reason, I wish to apply for your Marketing internship, for the period of April to August 2010. I am convinced, within this program that I will acquire a better understanding of marketing and sharpen the skills that will enable me to contribute to the success of your company.

I wish to intern for Company X to learn the marketing practices from an industry leader. As a Business Administration student with an area of expertise in Finance and Marketing at Maastricht University, I have always been drawn to the field of marketing. At the young age of 13 I opened my first business, selling drinks, candy and other treats in my school. It was here that I learned the importance of a competent marketing strategy as I used my networking skills to develop a loyal customer base. I continued to adapt this strategy, utilizing online social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. I believe that these online mediums are part of the future of marketing, and wish to bring these ideas to Company X.

I am an accountable and personable problem solver, who readily adapts to change, works independently, exceeds expectations, is able to multi-task and meet deadlines without compromising quality. I assure you I would make a successful intern at Company X by exemplifying the company's core values of Global Teamwork, Continuous Improvement and Caring. First, I have real and successful international experience during my academic exchange abroad in Australia, and in the United States working for a public safety company.

Second, both in academic and professional life, I have always pushed myself to achieve and improve. I had an enriching marketing experience while working at Geelen Motors, a top selling car dealership in Maastricht. I started working in the mail room and worked my way up to Assistant of the Marketing Manager. During this marketing experience we were trying to read the customer's mind to understand their wants and respond efficiently to their needs. Therefore, we tried to segment all of our data to get closer to each customer so that they would continue being loyal not only to the brand but to the dealership.

Third, your company's dedication to equity in the workplace is commendable. As the causes of humanitarian relief and community service are near to my heart, I am deeply moved by Company X's charitable work providing dental health to impoverished communities. While building houses in the poorest neighbors of Cape Town and serving as Marketing Director for Dreams Alive, a non-profit dedicated to help impoverished children, I began to appreciate the difference that corporations can make to society.

I believe the aforementioned skills and my drive to excel would make me an asset to your team. I welcome any opportunity to further discuss my enthusiasm through an interview at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Your Name