

CONTACT EMPLOYERS

Every résumé requires an introduction—an explanation for why it was sent. An effective cover letter introduces your résumé, summarizes your immediate career goals, and is used for many reasons:

- Respond to specific job postings for direct hire
- Request an interview invitation
- Inquire about opportunities
- Follow-up an interview to show appreciation

FORM LETTERS

Never send a form letter to employers. This might seem like an easy and quick way to contact hundreds of employers with your résumé. Candidates erroneously use this approach—often called the “shotgun” approach—to claim they have done an “exhaustive” job search, sending résumés to hundreds of employers and receiving no responses. Upon this premise, they conclude that there are no jobs out there, and they blame the bad economy or others for their joblessness. How often have you heard, “I’ve sent out 400 résumés and posted a résumé on every major job board, but no one is getting back to me. There are no jobs.” ECS would never condone this as even an “outlier” strategy for conducting an effective job search.

TRADITIONAL COVER LETTER FORMAT

Using form letters is a waste of your time, so create a targeted list of employers. Then develop letters or emails specifically for each employer. Each communication will include these basic elements:

Introduction

Clearly and simply state why you are writing to the employer. It is crucial for you to make it clear that you deserve further consideration. If appropriate, identify the person, by name, who suggested you contact the employer. This use of connecting is particularly effective.

Body

Emphasize the match between your qualifications and the employer’s needs. Do not simply repeat your résumé but expand upon 1 or 2 qualifications that fit the specific position for which you are applying. Describe how your background has prepared you as a “good match” for the ongoing and/or future needs of that specific employer.

Closing

Request employer action (i.e., an interview or a response for a site visit) at the employer’s earliest convenience. Indicate the

next step you will take, such as “I will contact you during the week of October 2 to follow up on this request.” Close with a goodwill/ appreciation statement: “I look forward to meeting with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.”

QUICK TIPS

Every résumé requires an introduction or explanation for why it was sent. Most likely, you will email your “cover letter” as the body of the email and you will attach your résumé.

TONE AND TIMING

Professional tone

While the message content is important, the tone is equally important. Be professional. Address the message to Mr., Ms. or Dr. XXX. It is rarely acceptable to use first names in a business salutation. Avoid using slang and contractions (“I’ve” and “you’ll”). Be courteous and respectful.

Effective timing

Traditionally, employers recruit new college hires on campus in early fall and early spring, but new market needs and budgets affect timing.

EMAIL REMINDERS FOR JOB SEEKERS

In most cases, it is acceptable to communicate with employers by email. This includes the initial contact, follow-ups after an interview, and thank you’s. Email can be very effective (i.e., quick)—or disastrous—if sent to the wrong person, written too informally, conveying a negative message, or containing spelling or grammatical errors. Use strictly formal business communication tones when communicating with an employer by email.

BUSINESS EMAIL ETIQUETTE

- The biggest mistake students make in using email for their job search is treating it too casually. This is business! Not social.
- Be professional. Edit your message and double check the address prior to selecting the “send” button.
- Don’t be sloppy. This isn’t texting. You are not asking someone for a date or gathering a group to study or hang out. You are looking for a job.
- What emotion does your email convey? What are the implications and perceptions? Email does not project emotions as well as face-to-face or even phone conversations.

It lacks vocal inflection, gestures, and a shared environment. It also does not communicate normal cues such as dress, diction or dialect. The reader will make assumptions based on your name, email address and facility with the language. You need to be meticulous. Write in a precise, clear manner.

- Make everything completely clear and unambiguous. Use perfect spelling, eloquent words and correct grammar. Don't be conversational. Do not use funny, cute or non-professional email addresses.
- Sarcasm and humor are particularly dangerous to use in email.
- Choose your words very carefully. Adjust your communication styles to the medium of email.

QUICK TIPS

- *Email business communication is MUCH different than personal email communication. Re-read this statement. Slow down and think of what you are doing.*
- *Do not hit the "send" button! Review and spell check. Check the tone for professionalism. This is not a social, how ya' doin'? type of email!*

COVER LETTER – TAILORED TO POSITION DESCRIPTION

Cover letters should address how your experiences match the qualifications for the position. You may demonstrate this in paragraph or bullet form. In general, you want to keep the cover letter to one page and succinctly, yet thoroughly demonstrate your fit for the role.

SAMPLE LETTERS AND EMAILS

The following pages contain cover letter and email text samples for you to reference when contacting potential employers during all aspects of your job search.

Some things to note:

- Always attach a résumé—perhaps a revised version, if you have made changes. If requested, you also may attach a list of your references.
- Attach your résumé as a PDF file or a lower MS Word document version to reduce problems in opening the attachment.

QUICK TIPS

- *Try your best to address the letter to a particular person.*
- *Never use: To Whom it May Concern or Dear Sir/Madam.*
- *If you have exhausted all your resources for finding a name, use this memo format instead: RE: Mechanical Engineering Job Posting*

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Continuous Improvement Engineer

- Use data & statistical tools to create continuous improvement plans (including cost trending and improvement plans)
- Perform analysis to determine root cause of process barriers, identify sources of inefficiencies, waste or excess costs, and develop recommendations for process improvements
- Champion and lead improvement projects within a distribution center
- Partner with leadership to provide training recommendations to operations
- Produce analyses and provide information required by operations and the customer
- Support new business initiatives and start-up facilities
- Identify and implement initiatives/projects that reduce costs and improve services to customers
- Data analysis on items, zoning, pick lines, and capacity
- Facility layout and design as well as modification of existing space
- Maintain inventory locator system

Required Job Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering
- 1-3 years of industrial engineering experience in distribution environment
- Advanced proficiency in Microsoft Office (Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Access)
- Proficiency in SQL, data pulling, data analytics
- Proficiency in AutoCAD
- Ability to travel to logistics centers as needed (maximum travel of 25% based on project activity)

Personal Qualities

- Ability to work across a network and effectively interact with a variety of stakeholders
- Skilled in conveying information in understandable terms at all levels of the organization
- Objective and resilient when presenting findings and insights
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills

TAILORED COVER LETTER

I am applying for the Continuous Improvement Engineer position posted in Handshake. I was informed about the opening at the engineering career fair on the UW-Madison campus by your recruiter, Justin Ng.

I meet the qualifications outlined in the job description as noted below:

- **Bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering** – I will be completing my degree in May 20XX with a certificate in business. I have a solid academic record with a 3.0 GPA.
- **1-3 years of industrial engineering experience in distribution environment** – As you will see on the attached resume, I have had a co-op and two summer internships focused on industrial engineering. While not focused on distribution, much of the work aligns closely to this position.
- **Proficiency in Microsoft Office, SQL, data pulling, data analytics and AutoCAD** – Through a combination of courses and work applications, I have developed solid skills with computing tools. ISyE 312 course focuses on data management and requires using SQL for data analytics. My internship at Technology Leader, Inc required extensive data pulling and analytics to review production metrics.
- **Ability to work across a network and effectively interact with a variety of stakeholders** – Through my past summer positions, I developed the ability to work with a variety of stakeholders. A position in retail provides exposure to a wide variety of customers and colleagues. One of my strengths is my ability to thrive work in a diverse team and accomplish goals set by supervisors.

I am excited by the opportunity to work at Technology Leader, Inc. I look forward to learning more about this opportunity and discussing my qualifications in an interview.

Regards,
Samara Koval