

Professional Correspondence

Career Development

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Cover Letter Etiquette

There are different methods for submitting materials. It is important to read through the details regarding how to apply to any given opportunity. Some opportunities will be submitted via a web portal where the required documents (resume, cover letter, portfolio, references) are uploaded and the contact details are typed into fields.

Alternatively, you may be asked to send materials to a separate person at an email address. When emailing a Human Resources representative or Talent Acquisition staff member, since they are not the hiring manager, you may simply send an email with all documents as attachments and a simple introductory message accompanying the attachments. The subject line of your email should be clear and concise. If the job posting specifies a subject line, type it exactly as provided.

If it is a small company, and thus your email will likely initially be reviewed by the person actually making the hiring decision, the cover letter should be embedded in the body of the email. For ease of access, the cover letter should also be attached as a properly formatted PDF (see page 3).

Cover Letter Do's and Don'ts

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Research the employer and analyze the job description carefully.✓ Tailor your cover letter to each company and position. Show how you meet the needs of the position to which you are applying.✓ Write concisely and format effectively. Remember, this is a writing sample. Use action verbs and descriptive statements to assist the reader with identifying why you should be called in for an interview. 3-5 paragraphs max.✓ Proofread for errors and accuracy. Make sure any names are spelled correctly.✓ Follow up with the employer if you hear nothing after 1-2 weeks. Inquire if any further information is needed and reiterate your interest. Be polite.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Explain what the employer can do for you instead of what you can do for them.✗ Be generic.✗ Be lengthy.✗ Make careless mistakes.✗ Wait to be contacted.

Cover Letter Structure (Attached PDF)

Date (Start the date 2 inches from the top of the page)

<

< **2 Spaces**

Individual's Name

Title

Name of Organization

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

<

<

<

<

< **5 Spaces**

Dear Mr./Ms. (Individual's Name):

<

< **2 Spaces**

First Paragraph: Introduction and context

State the reason for writing. Name the specific position and type of work for which you are applying. Explain where/how you learned of the position or company.

< **1 Space**

Second Paragraph: What you know about them and what you can contribute (examples/descriptions)

Explain why your past experiences and training make you a great fit for this position and specify how you have the skills stated in the job description. Provide past examples of utilizing those skills. Include something special or unique about yourself that would benefit the employer. Remember, the reader will consider this an example of your writing skills.

< **1 Space**

Third Paragraph: Closing and invitation to interview

Mention that your resume is enclosed and indicate your desire to meet with the employer. Be sure to communicate your plan to follow up, never leave it up to the employer to get in touch with you. Finally, thank the employer for their time and consideration.

< **1 Space**

Sincerely,

<

<

<

< **3-4 Spaces**

Your signature in blue or black ink

Your typed name

Street Address

(Address Optional)

City, State, Zip Code

Phone number with Area Code

Email address

<

< **2 Spaces**

Enclosed: Resume

Sample Cover Letter – Sample 1

Date

Ms. Grace Coolidge
Director of Human Resources
ABC Graphics
1234 Valley Drive
Minneapolis, MN 56316

Dear Ms. Coolidge:

It has come to my attention via the Indeed website that the position of Graphic Design Assistant has been made available with ABC Graphics. I possess the creative and technical skills outlined in the job description, and feel I would be an asset to your organization. I am very interested in pursuing this exciting opportunity.

Presently, I am enrolled at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and I expect to graduate in May of 2019. I have extensive training in computer graphics, electronic imaging, and production. I am skilled in Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, and InDesign. While working in a team environment, I have created and developed logos, branding, and innovative marketing concepts. I feel this experience would be highly beneficial in the Creative Design Department at ABC Graphics.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss my background and qualifications. Thank you for taking the time to review my resume and consider my qualifications. I will be in touch to follow up with you by the end of the next week.

Sincerely,

Jessica Thompson
15 South 9th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55402
612-234-5678
jthompson@gmail.com

(Address Optional)

Enclosed: Resume

Sample Cover Letter—Sample 2

Date

Mr. Samuel Roth
Talent Acquisition Manager
National Lens
14 Mountain View Street
Minneapolis, MN 56316

Dear Mr. Roth:

The available Photographer position with National Lens recently came to my attention via LinkedIn. Given that my skill set includes the creative and technical skills outlined in the job description, I was eager to apply. I believe I would be an asset to your organization.

In my current role as Assistant Photographer at Camera Obscura, Inc., I have photographed for a variety of clients. My extensive experience spans from the creation side—operating Sony and Canon DSLR cameras—to post-production, including such skills such as applying presets and color correcting in Adobe Lightroom. In addition, I have completed several creative projects on tight deadlines using Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, and InDesign. While collaborating with diverse teams, I have contributed images, booklets, and essential assets to marketing materials within established brand identity guidelines.

Above all else, I am interested in this position because I want to support quality photography. I am confident my demonstrated production skills will be beneficial to National Lens. I would appreciate the opportunity to interview for this position at your convenience and can be best reached by email at ebarton2@gmail.com or phone at 612-432-1007. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Edward Barton
612-432-1007
ebarton2@gmail.com

Enclosed: Resume

Sample Cover Letter (Email Body) – Sample 4

Dear Mr. Smith:

Your recent animation internship posting on the Minneapolis College of Art and Design's career development website greatly intrigued me. GoGames is a leader in cutting-edge game design and I have been following the company's rise for the past few years from a three-person operation to your current status of over one hundred employees worldwide. As an animator with an extensive repertoire of skills, I am very eager to utilize these skills to the benefit of a company which I admire.

As detailed within my resume, I have worked on many classroom projects which have increased my proficiency in 3D animation and design. In particular, I am adept at developing effective and creative storyboards and creating 3D models, as well as ensuring accurate lighting. I am capable of utilizing Flash, 3D Max, and After Effects, as well as employing Photoshop and Illustrator to sketch and flesh out conceptual designs. In addition, I have experience working cohesively as part of a team and completing projects prior to established deadlines.

I am confident that my ample skills in the field of animation make me an excellent candidate for this position and I am eager to discuss my qualifications and portfolio in detail. I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Many thanks,

John Doe
johndoe@gmail.com
555.555.5555

Sample Cover Letter (Email Body) – Sample 5

Dear Ms. Doe:

It came to my attention from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) Career Development department that Main St. Media has an available summer internship opportunity. Currently, I am a filmmaking major with extensive skills in video camera operation, film editing, and lighting support, and I am eager to utilize these skills alongside seasoned professionals in the field.

My focus in filmmaking at MCAD has been in documentary videography and storytelling. Recently, I completed a 20-minute feature on a local artist, which won first place at the Fun Film Festival. I have also further developed my technical capabilities in the area of video editing during a collaborative project in my Film Studies course. In my role as a team member, I was responsible for utilizing Adobe Premiere and After Effects to complete both the rough and final cuts of the footage shot by my teammates while adhering to tight deadlines. Furthermore, I participated in the creation of the original storyboard for the shoot.

My specialized training in filmmaking and my experience working effectively in a team has provided me with the tools I need to make a real contribution to Main St. Media. I would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss your available internship position and my qualifications. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Smith

Sample Introductory Email to HR (with Attachments)

Subject Line: Design Coordinator Application

Dear HR Team:

Attached are the required materials (resume and cover letter) for the **[insert the position title here]** opportunity. Please let me know if there are any file issues.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Sample Letter of Inquiry/Prospect Letter (Email Body)

Dear Ms. Doe:

Most recently, Main St. Studios came to my attention from Susan Smith, a client who speaks to your exceptional videography work. I was impressed by the clear attention to detail and professionalism exhibited by your team while completing the project for Ms. Smith. Therefore, I wish to inquire whether any summer internship opportunities might be available with Main St. Studios. As a junior filmmaking major at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design with extensive skills in video camera operation, film editing, and lighting support, I am very eager to utilize them alongside seasoned professionals in the field in order to contribute to the success of the company.

My focus in filmmaking at MCAD has been in documentary videography and storytelling. Recently, I completed a 20-minute feature on a local artist, which won first place at the Fun Film Festival. I have also further developed my technical capabilities in the area of video editing during a collaborative project in my Film Studies course. In my role as a team member, I was responsible for utilizing Adobe Premiere and After Effects to complete both the rough and final cuts of the footage shot by my teammates while consistently adhering to tight deadlines. Furthermore, I was integral to the creation of the original storyboard for the shoot.

My specialized training in filmmaking and my experience working effectively in a team has provided me with the tools I need to make a real contribution to Main St. Studios. If any internship opportunities arise within your company now or in the near future, I would greatly appreciate being considered for the role; accordingly, I would be happy to provide my resume and portfolio for your review at any time. Thank you very much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Jane Williams

Sample Letter of Inquiry/Prospect Letter (PDF)

Date

To Whom It May Concern
ABC Graphics
123 First Street
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Dear To Whom It May Concern:

I was recently reviewing your website and I immediately became intrigued with your organization's concepts and designs. My skill set includes the creative and technical skills which are demonstrated throughout your website and product line. Therefore, I am very interested in exploring possible graphic design opportunities with ABC Graphics.

As detailed within my resume, I am a recent graduate from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD). My education and training in the field of graphic design has afforded me the opportunity to refine my creative and design abilities. I am proficient in Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign. In addition, I possess exceptional skills pertaining to conceptual layout, branding, and typography. I am an innovative creator with the ability to work effectively and collaboratively. Furthermore, I have a strong commitment to task management and pride myself on consistently meeting deadlines. I am confident that my skills, talents, and abilities would be an asset to ABC Graphics.

If a position should become available to which you feel my background and qualifications would be a match, I would greatly appreciate your consideration and welcome the opportunity to present my credentials in an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Hedda Hopper

Thank You Letter Etiquette

Following an in-person interview, it is important to send a thank you email within 24 hours. The purpose of this thank you message is two-fold. One purpose is to properly thank them for their time. Secondly, this email demonstrates your initiative to follow up, active listening skills, and your attention to detail. The message should restate your interest in the position, bringing your name to the forefront again. The thank you letter is your opportunity to reinforce why you should be the candidate of choice.

Thank You Letter Structure (Email Body)

Dear Mr./Ms. (Interviewer's Name):

<

< 2 Spaces

First Paragraph: Thank the interviewer for discussing the opportunity with you. Be sure to name the specific position. Include a reference to something you spoke about and address how you would meet the needs/qualifications of the organization.

< 1 Space

Second Paragraph: Elaborate on how, after the conversation, you feel your skills align with the position. Demonstrate that you were actively listening by providing more thoughts about something you discussed in the interview. Remember, like the cover letter, the reader will consider this an example of your writing skills.

< 1 Space

Third Paragraph: Include one last thank you and share your enthusiasm to hear back from them or your plan to follow up.

< 1 Space

Sincerely,

< 1 Space

Your typed name

Sample Thank You Letter—Sample 1

Sent via email within 24 hours of interview.

Dear Ms. McElroy:

I enjoyed meeting with you and Mr. Smith yesterday morning. Thank you for the opportunity to review my work and discuss my background and qualifications as they pertain to our industry. The business philosophy at ABC Graphics and your vision for the future is very exciting!

Per our conversation, I feel confident that my education, training, and experience in the field of Graphic Design would be of great benefit to ABC Graphics. You discussed the importance of teamwork—please know that I work very well in a team environment, as well as independently.

Again, thank you for your time and I look forward to the possibility of working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Jessica Thompson

Sample Thank You Letter—Sample 2

Dear Mr. Tyler:

Thank you for the opportunity of interviewing for the Sign Maker position last Monday afternoon, especially during a busy work day. I also wanted to thank Sarah and the others for the tour of the facility. I am impressed by the enthusiasm displayed by the staff. The atmosphere made me feel welcome and I am sure customers feel that way as well.

I am very interested in pursuing an opportunity in the area of sign production and very much appreciate your consideration for this position. The prospect of working in a position that is varied and includes hands-on skills is very appealing to me. If you should have any additional questions concerning my qualifications, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Joy Johnson

Sample Thank You Letter—Sample 3

Dear Mr. Roth:

I enjoyed meeting you and your colleagues this afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to review my work and discuss my background and qualifications as they pertain to our industry. The business philosophy at National Lens and the vision for your organization's future is very exciting!

Per our conversation, I feel confident that my education, training, and experience in the field of photography would be of great benefit to National Lens. As you mentioned, it is important that your candidate of choice is creative, possesses a positive attitude, and works well in an established team environment. Please be assured that I would not only meet but exceed your expectations.

Once again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Edward Barton

Promoting Yourself in 30 Seconds or Less (Elevator Speech)

Properly presenting yourself in person or over the phone is very important when making the appropriate first impression. You should develop a brief self-presentation that promotes yourself in 25 seconds or less. Your self-presentation can be used at job fairs when you approach an employer's booth, when you are cold calling employers, over the phone when you are conducting informational interviews, or during the first few minutes of an initial interview.

Your self-presentation should include:

- Your name
- How you learned about the job/company
- Your current employment or education status
- What type of position you are interested in
- What skills and experiences you have to offer

Presented below is a script you can use in developing your self-presentation:

Hello, my name is _____. I was referred to you by _____ from _____. I am a (graduate/student) of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. I have a / or am studying towards a (Bachelor's, Associate's, Master's, Certificate) degree in _____. I am seeking a position as _____, and I believe my skills and experience in _____ closely match the skills that are required by this position. I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you further concerning my education and professional background, and how that applies to your available position.

Conversing on the Telephone

Follow up with a call a couple of days after submitting the application materials. Always conduct initial research on the company you are trying to get an interview with. Typically, the first call will go to voicemail, so leave a nice introduction of yourself and explain the purpose of the call.

Your goal is to talk to a live person, not a voicemail of someone who is in charge of hiring or who is involved in the hiring process. When you get them on the phone, confirm that they received your resume, if they had an opportunity to review it, and if they had any questions concerning your background and qualifications.

Ask if the position is still available and reiterate your strong interest in pursuing the opportunity. Also inquire whether it is possible to schedule an interview.

Typically, the employer will respond with "We're currently screening through applicants and we will give you a call back when we decide to bring candidates in for interviews." Thank them for their time and consideration.

Ask them to give you a time frame of when you can expect to hear back. Let them know that if you do not hear from them, you will be giving them a call (if appropriate).

Always ask questions before you get off the phone, such as "Can you tell me a little more about this opportunity?"

After a couple of questions, make sure that they know you are interested. "This sounds like a great opportunity; based upon my skills and abilities and your job description, this appears to be an excellent match."

If the position has been filled, or you are not qualified, continue talking. "I understand that you do not have any additional openings, but do you know of anyone outside the company that you would recommend that I speak with?" Make sure they know that if a position opens later for which your background and qualifications are a match, you would greatly appreciate their consideration.

Following Up by Email After Submitting Application

After you submit your application, typically the employer will respond with “We’re currently screening through applicants and we will contact you when we decide to bring candidates in for interviews.” This may be an automated email. Refer to employer’s policies about following up. Unless otherwise instructed, you may follow up with another email a couple of days after to find out if the position is still available, the timeframe for interviewing, and if it is possible for you to schedule an interview.

If the position has been filled, or you are not qualified, respond, “I understand that you do not have any additional openings, but do you know of anyone outside the company that you would recommend that I speak with?” Or, “If a position should arise within your organization that is in alignment with my skills and experience, I would appreciate your consideration.”