COVER LETTER GUIDE FOR BUSINESS STUDENTS

Employer Perspective:

- Hiring managers will glance at the cover letter but concentrate on the resume. If the resume matches the specific job requirements, the cover letter is typically read fully.

- When reading the cover letter, the employment manager will usually look to see if it is a generic cover letter or if it is specific/personal to the company. They may look closer at the ones who have a connection to that company (i.e. referral, networking event at college).

Content of a Cover Letter:

Regardless of what type of cover letter you are writing, the basic format is the same. Use the formula below as a general guideline for all cover letters.

I. Opening paragraph
   - Expresses your interest in the organization and/or position
   - Include how you heard about the organization (i.e. website, referral, networking event)
   - Demonstrates your knowledge of the organization or industry – **THIS IS KEY**

II. Body
   - Highlights a few major skill sets with examples to prove you possess that skill
   - Focuses on you and how your qualifications match their needs
   - Could be 1-2 paragraphs

III. Closing
   - Reiterates/Summarizes your interest and fit within the organization
   - Requests action – either an interview or follow up

Additional Tips:

- Keep it to one page
- Make an appointment with a career counselor/advisor to look over your cover letter
- Make sure it is error proof (grammar, spelling, sentence structure)
- Be concise and state skills with specific examples that are relevant to the position
- Don’t make it generic – that first paragraph should show the reader that you’ve done your research and have knowledge about the company and industry
JOB SKILLS INVENTORY CHECKLIST

Purpose: The purpose of this skills inventory is to help you come up with different skills that you may be having a hard time thinking of yourself.

How to use the Skills Inventory: The following is a sample list of skills found in a cross section of careers. Circle every skill that applies to you. Write down examples of situations in your professional life that demonstrate these skills. Then try to incorporate these skills into your cover letter.

administrating medication
administrating programs
advising people
analyzing data
analyzing problems
auditing financial reports
being thorough
budgeting expenses
calculating numerical data
checking for accuracy
classifying records
coaching individuals
collaborating ideas
collecting money
comparing results
compiling statistics
comprehending ideas
conducting interviews
conducting meetings
coping with deadlines
counseling/consulting people
creating new ideas
deciding uses of money
defining a problem
delegating responsibility
determining a problem
developing a climate of enthusiasm, teamwork, and cooperation
developing plans for projects
displaying artistic ideas
displaying ideas
editing work
enforcing rules and regulations
entertaining people
estimating physical space
evaluating programs
event planning
expressing ideas orally to individuals or groups
finding information
gathering information
generating accounts
handling complaints
handling detail work
imagining new solutions
interacting with people at different levels
inventing new ideas
listening to others
maintaining a high level of activity
making decisions
managing an organization
meeting new people
meeting people
motivating others
negotiating/arbitrating conflicts
operating equipment
organizing files
organizing tasks
overseeing operations
persuading others
picking out important information
planning organizational needs
predicting futures
preparing written communications
prioritizing work
promoting events
proposing ideas
questioning others
raising funds
reading volumes of material relating to the public
reporting information
running meetings
selling ideas
selling products
setting priorities
setting up demonstrations
setting work/committee goals
summarizing information
supervising employees
taking personal responsibility
teaching/instructing and training individuals
thinking in a logical manner
thinking of creative ideas
writing for publication
writing letters, papers, proposals
writing reports