Cover & Thank-You Letters

The written word may very well be your first and only chance to “speak” to a potential interviewer. Therefore, good presentation and professional style is critical to your success in securing a meeting. It is an important tool to open doors.

Put yourself in the employer’s place—what would you want a prospective employee to say to you? A good cover letter should encourage a potential employer to read your resume and most importantly, call you to schedule an interview.

Cover letters should:

--Be freshly typed.
--Be three or four paragraphs at maximum (do not exceed one page).
--Be addressed to the individual who has the capacity to hire you.
--Be in an “active” voice—professional, natural, positive.
--Convey focused career goals.

The introduction (first paragraph) should state who you are, why you are writing, the position you are applying for and where you found out about the job.

The body of your letter should highlight your unique qualifications. This is your opportunity to market yourself emphasizing your skills and related experiences. Avoid restating your resume if possible. Make sure you keep copies of all cover letters and resumes you send out for future reference.

Thank You!

After the interview, always follow up with the interviewer(s) via written note or card. A thank-you note or card should be sent within 24 hours on quality paper and can be handwritten. Make sure you use the individual(s) appropriate title and above all—that his or her name is spelled correctly!
October 15, 2002

Mr. Pablo Marquez
Human Resources Manager
Smart Corporation
5555 Computer Chip Road
Los Angeles, CA 90278

Dear Mr. Marquez,

I am very interested in the engineering position at Smart Corporation that was advertised through the Career Planning & Placement Center on October 10th. I am submitting a copy of my resume for your consideration.

In December, I will graduate with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering and will be available to work full-time. The engineering program at USC, as well as my Co-Op experience with IBM, has prepared me with technical skills and practical knowledge to be a contributing member to your organization.

I would like to have the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you in person. I will contact you next week to schedule an interview.

Sincerely,

Patrick M. Washington

Enclosure
October 31, 2002

Ms. Patricia Langdon
Human Resources Manager
Novela Company
5555 Heathcliff Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90278

Dear Ms. Langdon,

Thank you for meeting with me yesterday, October 30, to discuss the engineering positions at your company. It was a pleasure learning more about Novela and hearing about your plans for future growth.

After learning more about the Network Engineer position, I am confident that my education and experience have provided me with the skills to succeed in the position. I am very interested in having the opportunity to work at Novela. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

James Shar
3650 McClintock Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90089-1455
(213) 555-4530