

Follow Up Letters, Inquiry Letters, Unsolicited Letters

This unit will have you produce more letters that are used in the employment process.

Follow Up Letter (thank you letter)

A majority of job applicants do not follow up after they've had an interview. In order to set you apart from those applicants, it is highly recommended that you communicate your thanks to the interviewer(s) immediately following an interview. Ideally, this letter is sent the same day as the interview, or at least by the next day. Your letter, conveying your appreciation for the interviewer's time and consideration, is a courtesy which will serve to help impress the company with your attention to detail. Here's the basic format:

Paragraph One

Start off with the main idea – express thanks for the interview, identifying when you interviewed, and the position for which you were being considered.

Paragraph Two

Include ideas such as your feelings about the company, how excited you are to be considered with such a reputable company, and things you learned during the interview that impressed you. You should reinforce and restate your qualifications for the position — anything positive that will serve to strengthen your opportunity for employment.

Paragraph Three

Mention items such as you're looking forward to a favorable decision, that you hope your qualifications fit the position's requirements, that you're available for another interview, and again, thank them for being considered for a position with their company.

Make sure all your contact information is given in this letter. Every piece of correspondence should always have all your information: address at the top, and phone and e-mail information given in the last paragraph or below your name. Pay attention to spelling, grammar, and visual appeal of the letter. Again, make sure you follow the full block layout given in the Cover Letters unit.

I would recommend that you again send a copy of your resume with this letter – be a salesman all the way!

Inquiry Letter

This letter is written when you have sent a cover letter and a resume to apply for a position previously, and you haven't heard anything from that company. Typically, you should give a company around two weeks for processing applications. If you haven't heard from the company after two weeks, you are justified in sending a letter of inquiry. You could also be justified in calling the company to inquire about the status of your application.

The three pieces of information that the inquiry letter should include are:

1. Identify the position for which you applied.

2. State the date of your first letter and resume that were sent.
3. Again, ask for an interview. Remember in the cover letter, the purpose was to request an interview. That interview hasn't happened yet, so ask again!

Ideas that you might want to include in this letter are:

1. Re-state your interest in the company and in the position for which you applied.
2. Remind of your availability, i.e. "I'm available for immediate employment."
3. Highlights of your qualifications for the position.

This second letter might be routed to a different individual at the company than who first received your letter; so although you tell them that you are inquiring about your earlier letter, it should contain all your vitals, including address, phone, e-mail, and qualifications. You would again include your resume.

Unsolicited Letter

The cover letter that was written at the beginning of the term was a "solicited" letter. That letter was written to apply for a position that was advertised and the company was seeking qualified candidates.

This letter is "unsolicited." When you prepare an unsolicited letter, you are sending your letter and resume to a company for which you'd like to work, but you don't know if there is actually a position available for someone with your qualifications. By sending out these letters, you are increasing your opportunity for finding work because you aren't limiting yourself to advertised positions.

The most effective unsolicited letter will be addressed to the correct person at a company, and will state that you would like to be considered as a candidate for a position title that actually exists at that company. In other words, DO YOUR HOMEWORK! Check the company's web site to see if the Human Resources personnel names are given, and to see if job titles are listed anywhere. If not, you might want to consider calling the company, and ask to whom you should address a letter of application.

The pattern for this letter is:

1. First paragraph. Remember, the company hasn't asked for your letter. They aren't advertising for a job opening. Therefore, your opening paragraph has to be strong and attention-getting. Give them a reason to read through your letter and especially to read the included resume. Ask yourself what a company would want to know about someone in your field. Some students start this letter with a question, "Do you need...?" Here's another technique that has been successfully used: try writing a sentence with three key skills and those skills all begin with the same letter. For example, "I have developed a solid reputation for being precise, productive, and progressive" or "I am responsible, reliable, and respected" – obviously, don't use these word series, but it's a great technique if you want to try it.
2. Second paragraph. Use this paragraph to tell about your qualifications – telling the employer how your education, skills, and experience would make you an ideal employee for that company. The words you used for your cover letter can be used pretty well for this area of the letter.

3. Third paragraph. This last paragraph asks for action. What do you want done? Do you want an interview? Of course — so you need to say so. Don't assume they'll know what to do with your letter and included resume. So, thank them for their time and consideration, and ask for a personal interview at a mutually-convenient time. Again, make sure that all your contact information is included in this letter — address, phone, and e-mail.

© Shirley Reid and Indian Hills Community College