

COVER LETTER

NEELEY DEVELOPMENT SERIES – TOOL FOR BUSINESS

The logo for Texas Christian University (TCU), consisting of the letters "TCU" in white on a dark purple square background.

Neeley School
of Business

Professional
Development
Center
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PROFESSIONALISM AND THE NEELEY PROMISE

ACCOUNTABILITY

Neeley students demonstrate and display a willingness to accept responsibility and to acknowledge outcomes resulting from personal actions, behaviors, and choices. This means meeting deadlines in spite of external barriers, being on-time and prepared for classes and appointments, and acting in a manner that promotes positive interactions with peers.

COMMITMENT

Neeley students invest time and effort to maximize the value of the Neeley experience for themselves while enhancing it for others. This means making intentional decisions about which activities and experiences to engage in that will lead to growth and advancement towards personal and professional goals. By doing this, the “Do I have to?” mindset is subdued.

OWNERSHIP

Neeley students exhibit ownership by understanding that they alone are in control of their experience. This means taking initiative to improve knowledge and skills by leveraging resources and relationships and accepting that the results of personal efforts are an indicator of personal performance.

The Neeley School of Business unleashes human potential with leadership at the core and innovation in our spirit.

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CREATE YOUR COVER LETTER - AND BE PATIENT

A cover letter is an introduction and a marketing device. A well-written cover letter highlights your specific experience and skills.

STEP 1: HEADING

- Left-justified is most common
- If you are applying for an opportunity locally, use your TCU address - If you are applying for an opportunity in your hometown, use your home address
- Include the current date
- It's best to address your cover letter to a specific person. If you need a name, first check Handshake's Employer directory. If you don't find a name there, check LinkedIn, the company's website, and use your network. If you still come up empty, then be comfortable using *Dear Hiring Team: OR Dear Hiring Committee:*
- Include the requisition or job number, if available

STEP 2: WHAT TO INCLUDE

Introduction:

- Use a colon rather than a comma in your line of greeting
- Limit your introduction to two or three strong sentences to make a quick connection with your reader
- Use this paragraph to highlight something about the company that attracts you and how you heard about the opportunity

Core of your Letter:

- Focus on your background and how your experiences align with the job description
- Your letter should be different for each position you apply for and should tie into the job requirements
- Be specific - don't simply say that you "have good people skills" - instead, highlight an example that shows you have people skills
- Don't try to impress by incorporating lexical diversity - keep it simple
- Use professional language - phrases such as, "I would love this opportunity" are not appropriate
- It is okay to use "I" statements - use them sparingly

Action and Closing:

- Close with a strong reminder of why you are a good match for the position and the organization
- Remember to provide your contact information in the closing
- If you are mailing or bringing a copy of your letter to an interview, be sure to sign your letter where indicated in the example on page 7

STEP 3: CONSIDERATIONS

- **Spacing** is an important aspect of any business letter- pay attention to the spacing guidelines on the samples provided
- All spacing in the example assumes Word is using single-spacing
- Be **concise** in your letter
- **Proofread** and edit carefully
- **Fonts** should not be overly artistic- Calibri or Ariel are strongly recommended
- **Font size** should be between 10.5 - 12, no less and no more
- **Margins** should be one inch on each side and on top and bottom
- **Closing** should be *Sincerely*

COVER LETTER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

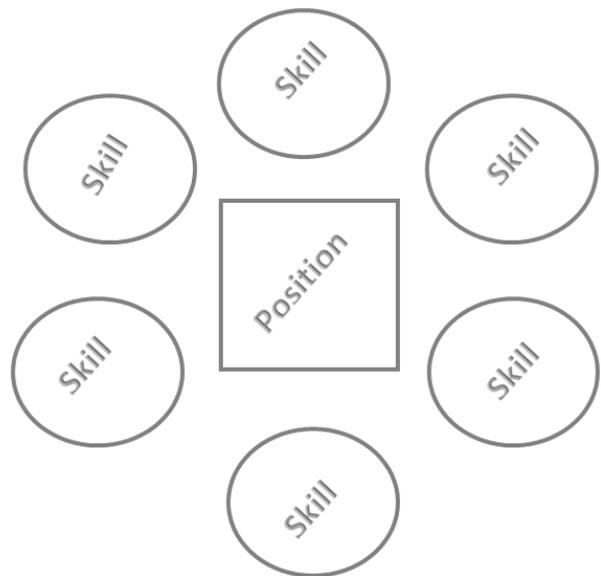
1. COMPANY RESEARCH

Paragraph 1:

- A. Position applying for
- B. Contacts/Referrals to reference
- C. News story or recent company activity that relates to the position/department/location
- D. Reason you are applying to this company specifically

2. DETERMINE YOUR FOCUS BASED ON THE JOB

- A. What skills/qualities does the employer want when filling this job?
- B. Of those, what are the top two skills you possess?
- C. List your top 2 skills in the blanks below. Think of a time when you have demonstrated these skills. What three things will you emphasize about the example that showcase your skills?



Paragraph 2 Skill:

Bridge: What can you say about this example that relates your skills/experience to the job? Wraps up the paragraph.

Paragraph 3 Skill:

Bridge: What can you say about this example that relates your skills/experience to the job? Wraps up the paragraph.

3. WRITE YOUR LETTER

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FORMAT

Your Name
Address
City, State Zip

Date

Contact Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr./Ms.:

Paragraph 1—Why are you applying to this company and to this position? Why them?
*Research the company and find something valuable to open with
Be brief*

Paragraph 2—Why hire you? Example 1
*Tell them something beyond the resume
Be focused and avoid trying to put too much information in the letter*

Paragraph 3—Why hire you? Example 2
Share something that highlights a relevant skill they would like to see in this position

Paragraph 4—The closing
*Thank them for their consideration
Be sure to include your contact information*

Sincerely,

Your Name

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Roger Roddick
123 Wimbledon Drive
Fort Worth, TX 76129

November 20, 20xx

Kelly Williams
Human Resource Manager
Wimbledon Corporation
14456 Center Court Drive
Fort Worth, TX 76123

RE: Req#25793

Dear Mr. Williams:

Wimbledon's recent Content Marketing award for 20xx by the National Marketers Coalition speaks highly to its reputation and aligns with my value for quality. Susan Cates, who works in the digital media department, informed me about the Marketing Analyst position and encouraged me to apply.

During my internship at ABC Marketing Group, I was charged with developing an infographic summarizing the company's core services. This project initially required patience as finding time to meet with supervisors and managers in other departments was challenging. During my conversations, I listened well, took notes, and asked the right questions which allowed me to create an effective infographic that the company is currently using as a way to attract new customers.

As a young professional, I understand the value of learning quickly. Last summer as an intern at KW Industries, I was placed on the frontlines to grow the business. Through cold calling, I established sales leads and increased the company's appearances at tradeshow through effective networking. It was an experience that taught me resilience and persistence. These past positions have provided me with knowledge and skills that will prove valuable as a Marketing Analyst at Wimbledon.

Thank you for your time in considering me for this opportunity and I look forward to visiting with you about this position in greater detail. Should you need further information, you may contact me at 555-512-5525 or by email at r.roddick@tcu.edu.

Sincerely,

(Insert digital signature here - optional)

Roger Roddick

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER



RE: Email addresses

Keep your email address professional; *wannabeadj@gmail.com* – no.



RE: Cover letter greetings

It's best to address your cover letter to a specific person. If you need a name, first check Handshake's Employer directory. If you don't find a name there, check LinkedIn, the company's website, and use your network. If you still come up empty, then be comfortable using *Dear Hiring Team:* OR *Dear Hiring Committee:*



RE: Electronic signatures

You can leave the signature space blank when sending a cover letter electronically. If you would like to include your signature, create an image of your signature that you can insert into electronic documents.



RE: Format for emailing cover letters

PDF is the most stable, meaning that your formatting will remain unchanged by the recipient's computer configurations.

Word - everyone has a version of it. The various versions mean your formatting may get messed up when an employer opens it.

Emailing to employer - Save your cover letter using your name and be sure to fill the subject line with the job position title or job number. *Example of a name Last, First_ Cover Letter_ PositionTitleJobNumber*



RE: Bullets, bold, and italics

Use these effectively and it can make your cover letter easier to read. Most recruiting personnel do an initial 30-second review of your cover letter and decide on which pile to place you in. Make it easy for them to read and follow.



RE: Consistency

Be sure your cover letter has the same contact information with the same font. Popular fonts include Calibri and Ariel. Font sizes should be no smaller than 10.5 and no larger than 12.

COVER LETTER MISTAKES

Not investing the necessary effort

The amount of effort you put into this document is a direct indication of how much you think you are worth. It takes several drafts to create a good cover letter. If you create yours in 20 minutes, you are selling yourself short.

Grammar, Spelling, and Formatting

This is by far the most frequent oversight in cover letters and resumes. Employers will remove you from consideration for poor format or spelling and grammar mistakes on cover letters and resumes.

Having a one-letter-fits-all mentality

Each position requires a different cover letter. You should tailor your letter to the specifics of the job or internship you are applying for. If you do not, you are missing opportunities to better your chances of being selected. Be sure to adjust the name of each cover letter to reflect to correct company name and job title.

Lots of buzzwords, but no content

You may be “an energetic leader capable of motivating others”, but if you do not specify examples, it comes off as hot air and counts for nothing.

Overusing “I”

Be sparing with “I” statements. This can lead to a perception of boasting or being unprofessional. It’s okay to use “I” statements, just be selective when you use “I”. Look for stronger ways to organize sentences where you can.

Simply repeating the resume

Use your cover letter as a way to provide greater insight about your experiences that make you qualified to work at the selected company.

Using words that are empty and not descriptive

Outstanding, effective, strong, exceptional, driven, motivated, and energetic are all words that tend to be overused. Be intentional with your word choice.

**“Don’t let your cover letter be the last thing
you ever say to a potential employer.”**

ABOUT THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Professional Development Center (PDC) provides the strategy, support, and resources for student talent development. Succeeding in today's dynamic workplace requires an ability to effectively manage interpersonal and team relationships on a global scale. With an emphasis on self-awareness, the PDC equips students with the skills necessary to establish themselves as business professionals capable of communicating their thoughts, ideas, and opinions to influence others and achieve goals. M.J. Neeley established the center, originally called the Center for Productive Communication, in 1987. He owned many businesses and had the foresight to understand the critical role communication has in business.

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Professional Series:
Interviewing
Resumes