

**McCallum  
Graduate School of Business  
Bentley University**

**Bentley Business Writing Kit**

*Guidelines and Samples for Your Job Search*

Cover Letter  
Thank you Letter  
Networking Letter  
Request for Informational Interview  
Thank you Letter for Informational Interview

Graduate Center for Career Services  
LaCava 275

## Sample Email Letter to a Networking Contact *You* Made

To: Mr. John Doe - Vice President – XYZ Software Company  
From: Susan Holmes

Subject: International Travel

Dear John:

Just a quick note to say what a pleasure it was to speak with you last night at the Bentley Alumni Networking event. I enjoyed hearing about your international travels for XYZ Software Company and the great people you have met around the world.

As promised, attached is the article I referred to during our conversation. I found it on <http://www.bentleyworldtravel.com>, which is an excellent source for international travel tips.

Should you run across any business contacts in need of an international business development person, please feel free to mention my interest in this area. I appreciate your willingness to give my search some additional thought. I will follow-up with you shortly to see if you might have some suggestions for me.

Thank you again for your time.

Best regards,

Susan Holmes  
781-891-2000  
sholmes@bentley.edu

## Template Letter Note to a Networking Contact *You* Made

The purpose of this note is to thank the person for speaking with you and to make an emotional connection with them. The hope would be that when a job opportunity arises, they think of you.

Be sure to have a complete signature file at the end of your email so they know how to reach you (phone, email).

Make sure your “subject” line in the email is catchy so the busy person will be inclined to open your email. Examples include:

- Following up on our meeting last night....
- Thank you for your time!
- A pleasure meeting you.

Remember, think of ways to be a “giver” to the person you have met. Examples include:

- Offer to meet with one of their contacts on an informational basis regarding your past work positions.
- Consider providing contacts to them for a business project on which they are working.
- Researching an area of interest to them and sending them articles that you find.

## Cover Letters

### *Introduction*

More often than not, you should write and send a cover letter with your resume. The cover letter gives you the opportunity to:

- Convince the reader to read your resume. Caution: ***If your cover letter is not exceptional they may never read your resume.***
- Highlight your accomplishments and SELL yourself. Don’t simply restate the information on your resume.
- Showcase additional accomplishments that are not on your resume.
- Create a positive first impression and stand out from the crowd.
- Demonstrate to the reader how you (the applicant) can meet the company’s needs.
- Explain any gaps in employment.

### *Helpful Tips*

- Use the job description’s vocabulary to match the words you use in your cover letter.
- Use the text as an organizing guide for your accomplishments. This will allow you to focus on WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR THEM.
- You may use your accomplishments to match your qualifications to the criteria listed in the job description (See Sample of “Traditional Cover Letter” and “T-Style Cover Letter” on pages 4 and 5 for more details).

### *Additional Resource*

#### **Quint Careers Web Site:**

<http://www.quintcareers.com/covres.html>

[http://www.quintcareers.com/cover\\_letter\\_tutorial.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/cover_letter_tutorial.html)

## Cover Letter Do's

- It is now widely acceptable to submit a cover letter electronically.
- However, if you are sending a cover letter by US postal mail, do type your letter and envelope on business stationery that matches your resume.
- Demonstrate strong writing skills.
- Read the cover letter at least three times.
  - Check for grammatical errors.
  - Check for spelling errors.
  - It is wise to put it aside after writing it and then reread it.
- Have others read your letter for feedback and proofing.
- Keep it short and to the point.
- Eliminate unnecessary words.
- Use active voice.
- Identify your audience.
- Imagine yourself in the prospective employer's position.
  - Try to answer the question the employers will be asking themselves as they read your letter: "Why should I hire this person? What value can this person add to our company?"
- Personalize your cover letter with Dear Mr. or Ms. X (last name).
- Always research whether the person is male or female.
  - Never assume someone's gender based on his or her first name. (For example, Randy and Sandy are names that can be used by both males and females). If you are unsure, call the company's main switchboard and ask.
- Use your own words.
- Keep copies of letters and mark call dates or dates for follow up on your calendar.

## Cover Letter Don'ts

- Avoid generic cover letters. Never use "Dear Sir/Madam." It is too impersonal.
  - Research the company's website and use other library resources to find a suitable contact.
  - If it is impossible to find a name, then *as a last resort* address it to Dear Hiring Manager or Dear Recruiter.
- Do not exceed one page—letter should be three or four paragraphs *maximum*.
- Each paragraph should have no more than four or five sentences.
- Do not overuse "I": Show yourself as a team player, not as self-obsessed.
- Do not leave the ball in the employer's court. Request an interview.
- Don't send generic letters; *customize your letter for each job opportunity*.
- Don't just restate your resume; **address the employer's stated needs**.
- Don't use fancy fonts or fonts smaller than 11 pt.
- Don't make the margins unusually small.

## Sample Thank You Letter for an Informational Interview

Ms. Susan Holmes

200 Lexington St. • Waltham, MA 02154 • 781-891-2000 • sholmes@bentley.edu

Date

Mr. John Smith  
Vice President of Corporate Marketing  
XYZ Software Inc.  
285 Appletree Way  
Boston, MA 02215

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you again for meeting with me this morning to discuss my career search in high technology marketing. I know how busy you are and your input is greatly valued.

Your advice on "networking" within the high tech community was most helpful. I have already ordered a subscription to Mass High Tech and the Boston Business Journal. I will also visit the various websites you recommended during our meeting.

Your willingness to introduce me to Ms. Susan Philbin and Mr. Mark Jones is greatly appreciated. As we agreed, I will await your email confirming that you have contacted them before I reach out to them directly.

Once again, thank you for the steps you have taken to strengthen my career search. I will keep you informed as my search progresses.

Sincerely,

Susan Holmes

## Template Thank you Letter for an Informational Interview

If someone meets with you regarding your career search, you should send him or her a thank you note. Even if you did not find the meeting particularly helpful, always send an enthusiastic follow-up note.

- Send the thank you note within two days of your meeting. This prompt letter conveys you have a good sense of business protocol. If the person is inclined to recommend you to someone else, your timely response will indicate that you will repeat the behavior and not embarrass him or her.
- Tailor and customize the note to the person with whom you met. If they gave you help in a specific area, be sure to mention that fact. Be sincere. Here are some sample phrases:
  - ➔ Thank you for your help.
  - ➔ I sincerely appreciate your assistance.
  - ➔ Your help is greatly appreciated.
  - ➔ Your advice on XYZ is greatly appreciated.
- Keep your note short and gracious.
- Focus on content. Remind the person why you met, what you gained from the meeting, and the steps you plan to take from the recommendations.
- Make sure they have all your contact information in case they need to reach you (i.e., to refer a JOB!).
- If the person indicates they would like to be kept in the loop regarding your career moves, then by all means send them a note when you find a job. You can even follow-up with them at interim points in your career search.
- The closing. You can add another thank you again in the closing paragraph. Some suggestions include:
  - Thanks again for all you have contributed to strengthening my career.
  - Thank you again for providing additional contacts to my referral network.
  - Thank you for introducing me to Mr. X.
- **DO NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, ASK FOR A JOB.** *Keep the focus on informational issues.*

## Template for a Traditional Cover Letter

Your Name  
City, State , Zip Code • phone & email

Date

Mr. or Ms. Name of Recruiter  
Recruiter's Title  
Company or Organization  
Street Address  
City, State and Zip Code

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

**Paragraph One:** Opening and Introduction (i.e., why *you* are interested in *them*.)  
Who you are, why you are writing and how you learned of the open position

- If someone referred you in the company and the person WILL speak highly of you, then don't hesitate to mention their name. Be sure to get prior approval when using someone's name in the cover letter.

Convey enthusiasm and eagerness to work for the company

- **Research the company and find something very compelling to say about why you want to work for them.** Avoid very "general" statements such as "I would like to work for an industry leader"

Summarize in ONE sentence the value you can add to the company.

- Use the job description as a guideline and make the **MATCH** between what the buyer wants and what you, the seller, have to offer.

**Paragraph Two:** Prove you are the best person for the job (i.e., why *they* should be interested in *you*.)

Give evidence of your skills and accomplishments

- Provide several accomplishments with astounding detail.
- Showcase different accomplishments than those on your resume.

Be sure to demonstrate knowledge about the company and the issues they are facing. The organization is **looking for you to do the matching work for them.** If you can understand their needs and communicate your ability to solve their problems you will be more likely to get an interview.

**Paragraph Three:** Closing Paragraph and Next Steps

Restate your eagerness about working for the company; request an interview

- Employers are impressed by candidates that take initiative and persevere.
- Thank the reader for their time and attention.

Sincerely,  
(Two spaces)  
*Your Signature*  
Your Name (Typed)

Enc. (List of what is enclosed with the application)

## Sample Traditional Cover Letter

Ms. Susan Holmes

200 Lexington St. • Waltham, MA 02154 • 781-891-2000 • sholmes@bentley.edu

Date

Mr. John Smith  
Vice President of Corporate Marketing  
XYZ Software Inc.  
285 Appletree Way  
Boston, MA 02215

Dear Mr. Smith:

Mr. Steve Johnson suggested I write to you regarding my application for the Marketing Manager position posted on XYZ Software's website. As you will see by my attached resume, I am currently a second-year MBA student at McCallum Graduate School of Business at Bentley University. Forrester Research ranked XYZ Software as the market leader for web-based learning, and I am eager to work for a company on the leading edge of Internet software development. After attending your company information session, I am confident I can make an immediate contribution to XYZ Software by applying marketing skills that I have developed during my previous work as well as my academic studies.

As Marketing Manager at eLearning Magazine, I helped the company develop and implement marketing programs to compete effectively in a crowded marketplace. Using qualitative and quantitative market research, I analyzed the firm's strategic position and recommended market and partner opportunities to strengthen its competitive advantage. Several of these partner agreements have led to increased sales opportunities and revenues for XYZ Software. I also developed targeted PR campaigns, which greatly enhanced eLearning's image in the magazine and trade show market.

Prior to my experience at eLearning Magazine, I managed lead generation programs for ABC Software in Boston, which resulted in a 25% increase in total leads generated over a one-year period and an increase in direct sales revenues of \$1.5M.

I am eager to work in the eLearning marketplace and bring my marketing and communications experience to XYZ Software. I welcome the opportunity to learn more about your needs and provide you with additional details regarding my background and how I can contribute to your organization. I am available for an interview at your convenience. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Holmes

Attachment or Enclosure (depending on whether using electronic or postal mail)

## Sample Email Request for an Informational Interview

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Professor John Doe of the McCallum Graduate School of Business at Bentley suggested I contact you. I would appreciate being able to meet with you on an informational basis to discuss your firsthand insights into the investment management field.

I am a second year MBA (first year or MS in Finance, *whatever is appropriate*) student at the McCallum Graduate School, with a concentration in Finance. My previous professional experience includes several years' experience in finance departments of high technology and medical device firms. Upon graduation, I am interested in working as an analyst in an investment management firm so I am currently exploring the best path to achieving this goal.

I understand you are very busy but would greatly appreciate being able to meet with you briefly at your convenience. I eagerly look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Susan Holmes  
781-891-2000  
sholmes@bentley.edu

# Template for an Informational Interview

## Paragraph One: Introduction

- Who you are, who referred you and why you are writing
- Be specific that you are requesting an interview for INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES
- Be clear on the time commitment involved

## Paragraph Two: The Details

- How you got to where you are and why.
- What excites you and why?
- Where do you want to go and why?

## Paragraph Three: Conclusion

- Be empathetic and recognize they are busy.
- Always remember that individuals grant these interviews out of the kindness of their heart and to return a business favor.
- Stress that you will accommodate their schedule.
- Make yourself available at a time/place convenient to them.
- A face-to-face, in person meeting is always preferable to phone, but if that is not possible (due to the contact's schedule) then phone will have to do.

# Sample T-Style Cover Letter

Ms. Susan Holmes  
 200 Lexington St. • Waltham, MA 02154 • 781-891-2000 • sholmes@bentley.edu

Date

Recipient's Name  
 Recipient's Title  
 Organization's Name  
 Address

Dear Ms. / Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

I read with great interest the advertisement for Human Resources Representative as posted on e-Recruiting. Having recently earned my MBA from the McCallum School of Management at Bentley University, I am currently pursuing a position in the financial services sector that will utilize my extensive HR background. I am particularly excited about this position as I am aware of Fidelity's new HR initiatives in the area of management training and am confident that I can contribute to this endeavor. The following highlights of my background show that I am well qualified for the position:

Your Requirements:	My Qualifications:
Coordinate Conferences	Planned recruiting events, meetings and an educational conference
Recruiting	Attended career fairs, maintained relationships with area universities, placed advertisements
Counseling	Counseled employees on topics including harassment, effective management and professional development
Maintenance of Technology	Maintained web page job descriptions and employee information databases

In addition, throughout my professional and educational careers, I have consistently demonstrated exceptional organizational and communication skills. I am a hardworking professional who welcomes challenge and takes initiative in problem solving.

I would like the opportunity to tell you more about the skills and abilities I can bring to the position of Human Resources Representative. I am available for an interview at your convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Susan Holmes  
 Attachment or Enclosure (depending on whether using electronic or postal mail)

## Template for a Thank You Letter for Job Interview

- Thank you letters should be sent within two days of your meeting and/or interview.
- Email thank you letters are now perfectly acceptable; alternatively you can send a typewritten note (by US postal mail) or a handwritten note, if your handwriting is clear and easy to read.
- In some industries, such as high technology, an email thank you may be more appropriate; generally this will depend on the culture of the company and/or person with whom you interviewed.
- Depending on the timeframe within which the decision will be made, an email thank-you may make the most sense given it is the fastest.
- A separate thank you letter should be sent to each person with whom you interviewed at the company. **Never** send the same letter to multiple individuals.
- *Be sure to ask for a business card from each person you meet with.*
- Thank you letters should always be personalized and customized to the person with whom you met at the company. They should be relatively formal, **never** too casual.
- Reference something specific about your conversation with the individual. This will cause the person/employer to recall your interview and keep you in active consideration. If possible, try to highlight one of the accomplishments you discussed during the interview, or introduce a new one that builds on your interview discussion. This also helps to build rapport and your relationship with this individual.
- If you left out pertinent information during the interview/meeting, be sure to include it in the thank you letter.

Remember, the thank you letter is often a sales letter in disguise. It gives you the opportunity to emphasize the match between your background and the employer's interests. Always focus on what YOU CAN DO FOR THEM. The thank you letter should not exceed one page. Keep it short.

A very good eResource for help in composing a thank you letter is:  
<http://www.careerjournal.com/jobhunting/interviewing/20041116-marcus.html>

## Sample Thank You Letter for Job Interview

Ms. Susan Holmes  
200 Lexington St. • Waltham, MA 02154 • 781-891-2000 • sholmes@bentley.edu

Date

Mr. John Smith  
Vice President of Corporate Marketing  
XYZ Software Inc.  
285 Appletree Way  
Boston, MA 02215

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you for the generous amount of time you gave me earlier this week to discuss the position of Marketing Manager at XYZ Software. I enjoyed our conversation, especially our discussion on using web-based software for teaching adult learners in university continuing education programs.

During our meeting, we discussed the possibility of targeting several vertical markets as a further means of enhancing XYZ Software's competitive positioning. I agree with your assessment and am eager to explore several industries in which I have significant experience. At eLearning Magazine, we focused our marketing programs on three key industries: High Technology, Financial Services, and Government. At ABC Software where I led generation programs, our greatest success was achieved by targeting the top 500 firms in the Health Care and Technology Sectors.

I am very eager to collaborate with the team at XYZ Software and am confident my previous experience and skills in marketing programs would be an asset to your organization. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you again for your time. I am looking forward to meeting with you again in the near future to discuss next steps.

Sincerely,

Susan Holmes