



COVER LETTER ROADMAP

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT



Every cover letter is unique. This roadmap is meant to show basic concepts, including how to approach the writing process, and tools for brainstorming content that would be suitable for your individual cover letters.

OVERVIEW



This document contains:

- Part 1: The Job
- Part 2: The Match
- Part 3: The Letter
- Sample Cover Letter



Part 1: The Job

Writing a perfect cover letter begins with identifying a specific job posting that you're interested in. This allows you to tailor each letter, rather than submitting a generic document.

Here's a sample posting:

Event Specialist - Part Time Sales

Are you outgoing, friendly, and enjoy meeting new people? Our part time Event Specialist jobs are fun, exciting, and could be a great fit for you! You can be the brand ambassador who excels in captivating an audience during in-store events, with an emphasis on brand awareness, product demonstration, and sales.

Responsibilities:

- Promote best in class products as a brand ambassador at local retailers
- Set up and break down of work area
- Preparation and sampling of products chosen by the retailer

Qualifications:

- Friendly, enthusiastic, and comfortable talking to strangers
- Sales and/or customer service experience preferred
- Stand comfortably for up to 6 hours a day

We are among New England's leading sales and marketing agencies specializing in outsourced sales, merchandising, category management and marketing services to manufacturers, suppliers and producers of food products and consumer packaged goods. We offer a variety of trade channels including grocery, mass merchandise, specialty, convenience, hardware, consumer electronics and home centers. We bridge the gap between manufacturers and retailers, providing consumers access to the best products available in the marketplace today.

What did you notice as you read this description? What seems to be most important to this employer? To help you out, we've marked several trends. Words that appear multiple times are underlined, and requirements or responsibilities of the job are written in green.

This job description is very focused on sales, marketing, branding, and customer service. In addition, they're looking for someone who has people skills, can help out at company events, and ideally has experience in a prior customer service role.

The next step is identifying how *you* can address their needs!



Part 2: The Match

The exercise below is sometimes referred to as the “T-model” for writing a cover letter. In each box on the left, you’ll draw information from the job description. In each box on the right, you’ll think about your own strengths as a candidate for this position. There’s no need to use formal language yet; that’s the next step! This is simply a brainstorming tool.

<u>The Employer</u> What are they looking for?	<u>You</u> What can you offer?
Skills: promoting products, sales, talking to people/strangers, setting up work area and cleaning up after, captivating an audience, food prep, customer service	Skills: super friendly and can be enthusiastic on the job; good at talking to people, and I won’t be scared to talk to a stranger about the product; I did food prep in my job at Friendly’s during high school; I can do public speaking, since I took COM 101 at UMA; I’ve done event staffing with the SGA
Experience: sales, customer service, public speaking, food industry (preferred), event staffing	Experience: membership in student government; coursework in communications/public speaking; restaurant job at Friendly’s; worked at Walmart as a greeter and then as a cashier
The “good fit”: Why do you like about this employer? Why do you want to support their mission and purpose? I like that they emphasize a fun work environment, and I want to work with other people who are friendly and enthusiastic They are a reputable company in this industry	The “good fit”: Why would they choose you? What knowledge or personality traits do you have that make you a good match? What’s the connection between their mission, and your talents? I’m really friendly and bubbly, and I would be perfect for representing their brand really happily. I also have lots of the experience that they’re looking for

Check out our website for a blank version of this T-model worksheet!



Part 3: The Letter

Now that you've spent some time thinking about the job description and company values, identifying your strengths and relevant experiences, and mapping the connections between you and the company, you're ready for the final step: writing the cover letter itself! Here are some tips to keep in mind during your writing process.

1. This is a formal document. Unlike in your T-model worksheet, it's time to focus on grammar, spelling, and professional language.
2. It's easier to edit clumsy writing than no writing at all! The hardest part of writing the cover letter is just *getting started*, but once you have a draft, you can go back and make changes until you have a version that you're proud of. We can help with this process.
3. Make sure you aren't simply restating what's in your resume. The cover letter is a chance to expand on that information, demonstrate your writing ability, and show off the "soft skills" that don't fit as well in a resume context.
4. Whenever possible, show, don't tell. Instead of simply saying "I have great people skills," you can provide the employer with an example: "During my prior work experience at Walmart, I developed the skills necessary to communicate with a diverse range of customers, and to maintain a friendly and open demeanor even when working with difficult situations or clients."
5. Make sure your letter is addressed to a specific person. This could involve calling the company or researching online to find the appropriate name and title. If no information is available, consider using a formal salutation such as "Dear Hiring Manager/Internship Coordinator/Selection Committee:"

The final portion of this document is a sample cover letter. To keep your writing in your own voice, please do not copy and paste exact phrasing from this letter. The employer wants to learn about you, not the Career Connections staff! The only exception is that you'll notice the cover letter follows a specific format, which you should feel free to copy as you input your own data and addresses.



Your Address
City, State, Zip
Date

Name of Contact Person
Title
Name of Organization
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms.:

I am writing to apply for the Event Specialist position, which you listed with the Career Connections office of the University of Maine at Augusta. I am currently in my final semester of a bachelor's degree in Business Administration here at UMA. The coursework I have completed, combined with my prior work experience, makes me an ideal candidate for this position.

As both a greeter and a cashier at Walmart for several years, I developed strong communication skills, including a friendly and enthusiastic approach to customer service. Through this job, I have become comfortable conversing with complete strangers, and representing the company to a broad audience in a positive and exciting way. As you will see in my resume, I also have experience in the food industry from my time working at Friendly's as part of the kitchen staff. Finally, I have had the opportunity to develop my skills as a communicator through courses such as Public Speaking here at UMA, where I have also served as a member of the Student Government Association. During my time on the SGA, I helped set up and staff campus events, as well as assisting in the cleanup detail afterward. I am a friendly and outgoing individual who has demonstrated success in interpersonal and customer service roles.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and further discuss my strengths as a candidate. I can be reached at (phone number) from noon to five daily, or via email at any time. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name