



# Types of Job Search Correspondence

F1

There are numerous reasons why you may need to write a letter during your job search, and from applying for a position to accepting an offer, each piece of job search correspondence has similarities and differences. General guidelines and explanations for some of the different job search letters are provided in this reference. Formulas and examples of each type of letter are also available in additional Writing Letters Ready References (F1 – F10).

## Basic Business Letter Guidelines

1. Use the same high quality, 8 ½" X 11" paper for letters that you use for your résumé.
2. Always use a word processor and quality printer for your correspondence, and only print on one side of the paper.
3. Keep in mind that your letter may be scanned for storage with your résumé. Make sure the format and font meet scannable guidelines. See the Scannable Résumés Ready Reference (E-10) for recommendations for scannable documents.
4. All correspondence should be neat in appearance. Proofread for spelling, grammar, punctuation and typographical errors. Have someone else proofread your documents as well. Remember, your letter will leave a lasting impression of you and the quality of your work.
5. Keep all correspondence brief and to the point. Employers don't have time to read a personal novel and will lose interest with irrelevant information.
6. Be sincere and polite. All job search letters should express your appreciation. Again, your letters are a representation of you, including your attitude.
7. Make sure you always sign your written correspondence.

## Cover Letters

A cover letter's purpose is to serve as an introduction to you and your résumé. The most common types of cover letters include:

- Letter of Inquiry – A letter written to inquire about a possible position with an organization. Letters of inquiry focus on broad qualifications and career objectives to

describe how your qualifications match the specific work environments of the organizations.

- Letter of Application – A letter written to apply for a specific position. The purpose of an application letter is to get your résumé read and to generate an interview. The letter should demonstrate that your skills fit the requirements of the position.

## Networking Letters

Since networking is the method through which 85 percent of job seekers find their positions, you may find it helpful to write a networking letter at some point in your job search. Networking letters can serve as an introduction, a request for an informational interview or a letter seeking to establish a network contact. In most cases, your résumé will not be included with a networking letter.

## Follow-Up Letters

Follow-up letters are used after some type of job search action or event. Follow-up letters include:

- Thank You Letters – Letters sent as a professional courtesy and as a method of establishing communication and goodwill with a company or contact. Thank you letters are one of the most important, yet one of the least used tools in a job search. The basic rule of thumb is that anyone who helps you in any way should receive a thank you letter. Thank you letters may be used following a career fair contact, after receiving assistance from a networking contact, in response to phone conversations or informational interviews and for those who provided references.

In response to interviews, thank-you letters should always be sent within 24 hours following the interview. In addition to thanking the interviewer for his or her time, a post-interview thank you letter may also be used to provide additional information or to clarify a point from the interview. Remember, you never know when or why the employer will be making a decision.

- Letter of Acknowledgement – Letters sent to confirm an invitation or offer. One example is a letter acknowledging an invitation for a plant visit or informational interview. If interested, state what dates would be convenient in the letter. Do not delay in accepting or declining the invitation; procrastination makes a bad impression.

Another example is a letter to confirm the receipt of a job offer. Restate the title of the position, salary and any other important terms of the offer in your letter of acknowledgement. Express appreciation and indicate the date you will notify the company of your decision. Act on your decision and notify the company before that date.

- Letter of Refusal – Correspondence declining an offer of employment. Express your appreciation for the job offer and for the company's interest in you. Indicate that you have carefully considered the offer and have decided not to accept it. Be polite and positive. Keep in mind that you may be corresponding with the same individual or applying with the same company at a later date.
- Letter Seeking Additional Information – Letter that may be written if you are awaiting an offer, or if you have received an offer but need additional information. Indicate your interest in the company, and be specific about the information or response you need. Express your

appreciation for the cooperation you anticipate.

- Letter of Acceptance – Appropriate letter to send when you have received and decided to accept a job offer. Indicate your acceptance of the offer of employment. Restate the position title, compensation offered, and the starting date if previously established. Refer to the date of the original offer. Indicate your travel plans and arrival date if the position requires relocation.
- Withdrawal Letter – Letter sent to inform employers of your decision to withdraw your application from consideration, primarily sent upon the acceptance of a job offer with another employer. In honesty, you may choose to state that your decision to accept employment with another organization was based on a better fit at this point in your career. Do not say that you obtained a better job. Remember, you may be applying with the same company at a later date.
- Letter of Resignation – Correspondence providing formal notification to a current employer of your intention to leave your present position. Convey appreciation for the experiences you have had during your employment. Indicate that you have carefully considered the decision and express your confidence in making the right decision for yourself and your career. Again, be polite and positive. A positively communicated resignation will help maintain network connections you may need in the future.
- Follow-up After a Turndown Letter – Letter to use after interviewing for a position, if the employer decides to hire another candidate. To keep the lines of communication and opportunity open, it may be a good idea to let recruiter know you are still interested in the organization and would like to be considered for another position.