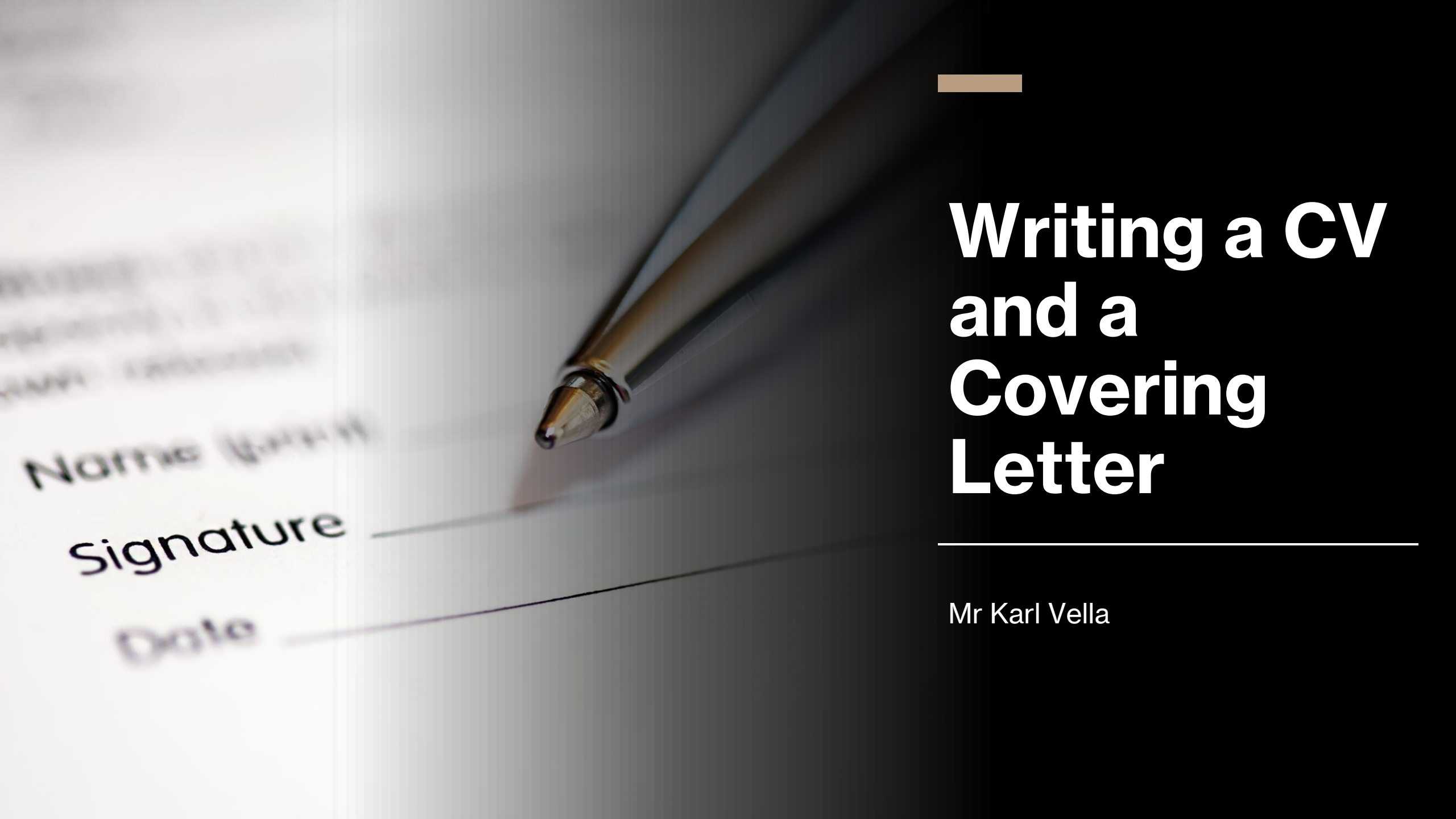




Writing a CV and a Covering Letter

Mr Karl Vella

Textbook Reference

- Excellence in business communication 6th Edition, 2017 by Bovée Courtland L., Keller Wendy I., Moran K. M., Thill John V., Pearson Canada Inc.

Curriculum Vitae

Definition:

‘The course of one’s life’



Introduction – Characteristics of a CV

- Although you will create many messages during your career search, your CV will be the most important document in this process. You will be able to use it directly in many instances, adapt it to a variety of uses such as an e-portfolio, and reuse pieces of it in social networking profiles and online application forms.





Introduction – Characteristics of a CV

- Writing a CV is one of those projects that really benefits from multiple planning, writing, and completing sessions spread out over several days or weeks. You are trying to summarize a complex subject (yourself!) and present a compelling story to complete strangers in a brief document.
- Remember to pay particular attention to the “you” attitude and presentation quality;
- Your CV will probably get tossed aside if it doesn’t speak to audience needs or if it contains mistakes.



Facts and fallacies about CV (résumé)

Fallacy	Fact
The purpose of a résumé is to list all your skills and abilities.	The purpose of a résumé is to kindle interest and generate an interview.
A good résumé will get you the job you want.	All a résumé can do is get you in the door.
Your résumé will be read carefully and thoroughly.	In most cases, your résumé needs to make a positive impression within 30 or 45 seconds; only then will someone read it in detail. Moreover, it may be screened by a computer looking for keywords first, and if it doesn't contain the right keywords, a human being may never see it.
The more good information you present about yourself in your résumé, the better.	Recruiters don't need that much information about you at the initial screening stage, and they probably won't read it.
If you want a really good résumé, have it prepared by a résumé service.	You have the skills needed to prepare an effective résumé, so prepare it yourself—unless the position is especially high-level or specialized. Even then, check industry practices and qualify the service before using it.



Gather important information

1. Gather your relevant personal history, including all the specific dates, duties, and accomplishments of any previous jobs you've held.
2. Compile relevant educational experience that adds to your qualifications – formal degrees, skills certificates, school leaving certificates and academic awards.



Gather important information

3. Also, gather any information about school or volunteer activities that might be relevant to your job search, including offices you may have held in a club or professional organization, or presentations you might have given to a community group.
4. You probably won't use every piece of information you come up with, but you'll want to have it at your fingertips before you begin composing your CV.



Tips for success

“ The best way to get started is to brainstorm about your natural talents and abilities. Write down everything you’ve accomplished, even as far back as childhood. This is a confidence boost and also can help you get everything out on paper that you could possibly include in your CV.”

Hallie Crawford, Professional Coach



Chronological CV

- In a chronological CV, the work-experience section dominates and is placed immediately after your contact information and introductory statement. The chronological approach is the most common way to organize a CV, and many employers prefer this format because it presents your professional history in a clear, easy-to-follow arrangement.
- If you're just graduating from Mcast or university with limited professional experience, you can vary this chronological approach by putting your educational qualifications before your experience.

Functional CV

THE FUNCTIONAL CV, sometimes called a *skills CV*, emphasizes your skills and capabilities while identifying employers and academic experience in subordinate sections.

This arrangement stresses individual areas of competence rather than job history.



Functional CV – Advantages

The functional approach also has three advantages:

- (1) Without having to read through job descriptions, employers can see what you can do for them;
- (2) you can emphasize earlier job experience; and
- (3) you can de-emphasize any lengthy unemployment or lack of career progress.

However, you should be aware that because the functional CV can obscure your work history, many employment professionals are suspicious of it. If you don't believe the chronological format will work for you, consider the combination CV instead.



Combination CV

A combination CV meshes the skills focus of the functional format with the job history focus of the chronological format.

The chief advantage of this format is that it allows you to focus attention on your capabilities when you don't have a long or steady employment history, without raising concerns that you might be hiding something about your past.



Errors to note...

The lack of an introductory statement of any kind forces the reader to piece together what this applicant is all about.

The body exhibits several problems and is not audience centred: bulleted lists are used ineffectively; items are poorly organized; the writing lacks parallelism; the word "I" is used far too often; the writing is verbose; and the format fails to highlight his most important skills.

The description of his education is wordy and lacks parallelism.

Roberto Cortez

4757 av Borden, Montréal, QC H4B 2P4
Home: (514) 555-0086 Office: (514) 555-6624
Email: RCortez@silvernet.com

I have been staff accountant/financial analyst at Inter-American Imports in Montréal, Quebec, from March 2005 to present.

- I have negotiated with major suppliers.
- I speak English, Spanish and French fluently, and I was recently encouraged to implement an electronic funds transfer for vendor disbursements.
- In my current position, I am responsible for preparing accounting reports.
- I have audited financial transactions.
- I have also been involved in the design of a computerized model to adjust accounts for fluctuations in currency exchange rates.
- I am skilled in the use of Excel, Access, HTML, and Visual Basic.

Was staff accountant with Monsanto Agricultural Chemicals in Mexico City, Mexico (October 2001 to March 2005).

- While with Monsanto in Mexico City, I was responsible for budgeting and billing.
- I am responsible for credit-processing functions.
- I was also responsible for auditing the travel and entertainment expenses for the sales department.
- I launched an online computer system to automate all accounting functions.
- Also during this time, I was able to travel extensively in Latin America.

I have my Master of Business Administration with emphasis on international business, which I earned while attending Concordia University, from 1999 to 2001.

Bachelor of Business Administration, Accounting (1995–1999), earned while attending Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Mexico City, Mexico)

The information is organized chronologically, but the awkward format hides this fact.

The writer fails to highlight skills and attributes that will be valuable to a future employer.

The lack of headings makes it difficult to find key information.

Effective chronological CV

The qualifications summary “brands” him as a management candidate—and also subtly expresses his career objective.

Side headings make major sections easy to find.

He highlights a few special skills, here focusing on talents that employers value in this position. The language is audience centred.

International Accounting Management

Experienced international accountant and financial analyst with proven leadership, planning, negotiating, and intercultural communication skills. Demonstrated ability to improve process efficiency and reduce operating costs.

Experience

3/2005
to present

Staff Accountant/Financial Analyst
Inter-American Imports: Montréal, Quebec

- Prepare accounting reports for wholesale giftware importer (\$15 million annual sales)
- Audit financial transactions with suppliers in 12 Latin American countries
- Verify Sarbanes-Oxley process and reporting standards
- Serve as project and team leader
- Created a computerized model to adjust accounts for fluctuations in currency exchange rates
- Negotiated joint-venture agreements with major suppliers in Mexico and Colombia
- Implemented electronic funds transfer for vendor disbursements, improving cash flow and eliminating payables clerk position

10/2001
to 3/2005

Staff Accountant
Monsanto Agricultural Chemicals: Mexico City, Mexico

- Handled budgeting, billing, and credit-processing functions for the Mexico City branch
- Audited travel & entertainment expenses for Monsanto's 30-member Latin American sales force
- Helped launch an online system to automate all accounting functions, improving reporting accuracy by 65%

Education

6/2001

Master of Business Administration with emphasis in international business
Concordia University, Montréal, Quebec

5/1999

Bachelor of Business Administration, Accounting
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Mexico City, Mexico)

Special Skills

Cultural

- Fluent in Spanish and German
- Extensive business contacts in Latin America

Technical

- Proficient with a wide range of financial software and systems, including Excel, Access, Microsoft Dynamics, and SAP Business One

ROBERTO CORTEZ
4757 av Borden, Montréal, QC H4B 2P4
Home: (514) 555-0086 Office: (514) 555-6624
Email: RC.Cortez@silvernet.com

The introductory statement succinctly summarizes his qualifications for an international accounting management job; an employer can “get” who he is in a matter of seconds.

Specific skills and accomplishments are presented in an easy-to-skim bullet format. They spotlight the candidate's ability to contribute to the company.

He has been out of college for over a decade (meaning his work experience is more immediately relevant), so the education section provides just the basic facts.

Writing a CV

Your CV is one of the most important documents you'll ever write. Follow the three-step process and help ensure success by remembering four key points:

1. Treat your CV with the respect it deserves. A single mistake or oversight can cost you interview opportunities.
2. Give yourself plenty of time. Don't put off preparing your CV until the last second and then try to write it in one sitting.
3. Learn from good models. You can find sample CVs online at job sites such as <https://europa.eu/europass/en/create-europass-cv>
4. Don't get frustrated by the conflicting advice you'll read about CVs. CVs are more art than science. Consider the alternatives and choose the approach that makes the most sense to you, given everything you know about successful business communication.



Composing your CV

Write your CV using a simple and direct style. Use short, crisp phrases instead of whole sentences, and focus on what your reader needs to know. Avoid using the word I, which can sound both self-involved and repetitive. Instead start your sentences with strong action verbs such as:

accomplished	achieved	administered	approved	arranged
assisted	assumed	budgeted	chaired	changed
complied	completed	coordinated	created	demonstrated
developed	directed	established	explored	forecast
generated	identified	implemented	improved	initiated
installed	introduced	investigated	joined	launched
maintained	managed	motivated	operated	organized
oversaw	participated	performed	planned	presented
proposed	raised	recommended	reduced	reorganized
resolved	saved	served	set up	simplified
sparked	streamlined	strengthened	succeeded	supervised
systematized	targeted	trained	transformed	upgraded

Statements to use and to avoid

Avoid Weak Statements

Responsible for developing a new filing system

I was in charge of customer complaints and all ordering problems.

I won a trip to Europe for opening the most new customer accounts in my department.

Member of special campus task force to resolve student problems with existing cafeteria assignments

Use Active Statements That Show Results

Developed a new filing system that reduced paperwork by 50 percent

Handled all customer complaints and resolved all product order discrepancies, resulting in a 15 percent increase in customer loyalty

Generated the highest number of new customer accounts in my department

Assisted in implementing new campus dining program that balances student wishes with cafeteria capacity

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1. Name and contact information

NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION Your name and contact information constitute the heading of your CV, so include the following:

- Your name
- Physical address (both permanent and temporary if you're likely to move during the job-search process)
- Email address – make sure it is professional
- Phone number(s)
- The URL of your personal webpage, e-portfolio, or social media CV (if you have one)

Be sure that everything in your CV heading is well organized and clearly laid out on the page.

1. Name and contact information.

Qualifications summary. A qualifications summary offers a brief view of your key qualifications. The goal is to let a reader know within a few seconds what you can deliver. You can title this section generically as “Qualifications Summary” or “Summary of Qualifications”.

Consider using a qualifications summary if you have one or more important qualifications but don’t yet have a long career history:

Summary of qualifications:

Ten years of experience in commission selling, consistently meeting or exceeding sales goals through creative lead generation, effective closing techniques, and solid customer service.

2. Education

- If you're still studying, education is probably your strongest selling point. Present your educational background in depth, choosing facts that support your "theme."
- If you're still working toward a degree, include in brackets the expected date of completion. Showcase your qualifications by listing them.
- The education section should also include off-campus training sponsored by business or government. Include any relevant seminars or workshops you've attended, as well as the certificates or other documents you've received.
- Mention secondary school if the associated achievements are relevant to your career goals.

3. Work experience & skills

- When you describe past job responsibilities, identify the skills and knowledge that you can apply to a future job.
- Devote the most space to jobs that are related to your target position.
- Whenever you can, quantify your accomplishments in numerical terms: sales increases, customer satisfaction scores, measured productivity, and so on.



Covering letter

Whenever you mail, email, hand-deliver, or upload your CV, you should include a covering letter, also known as a to let readers know what you're sending, why you're sending it, and how they can benefit from reading it.

Take the same care with your covering letter that you took with your CV.

A poorly written covering letter can prompt employers to skip over your CV, even if you are a good fit for a job.

Staffing specialist Abby Kohut calls the covering letter “a writing-skills evaluation in disguise” and emphasizes that even a single error can get you bounced off.

Tips – Covering letter

Follow these tips to be more effective:

- Resist the temptation to use generic, one-size-fits-all letters or to stand out with ‘dazzling’ covering letters; impress with knowledge and professionalism instead.
- If the name of an individual manager is known, address your letter to that person, rather than to something generic such as “Dear Hiring Manager.”
- Search LinkedIn, the company’s website, industry directories, Twitter, and anything else you can think of to find an appropriate name.

Tips – Covering letter

- Ask people in your network if they know a name. If another applicant finds a name and you don't, you're at a disadvantage.
- Clearly identify the opportunity you are applying for or expressing interest in.
- Show that you understand the company and its marketplace.
- Keep it short – no more than three or four short paragraphs. Keep in mind that all you are trying to do at this point is move the conversation forward one step.
- Show some personality, while maintaining a business-appropriate tone.
- The letter gives you the opportunity to balance the facts-only tone of your CV.
- Show confidence without being arrogant.
- Follow the employer's instructions for submitting your cover letter and CV.

AIDA model

The AIDA model is a persuasive approach. Messages are organized as follows:

A – Attention: engages the reader

I – Interest: shows relevance

D – Desire: links benefits

A – Action: motivates action

Solicited covering letter

2141 Michelle Crescent
Kelowna, BC V1Z 2W2
March 13, 2018

Sea-Air Global Transport
2000 Marine Drive
Vancouver, BC
V2P 2U7

Dear Hiring Manager:

Sea-Air Global Transport consistently appeared as a top transportation firm in the research I did for my senior project in global supply chain management, so imagine my delight when I discovered the opening for an export pricing analyst in your Vancouver headquarters (Position Code: T23-6678). With a major in business and a minor in statistical methods, my education has been ideal preparation for the challenges of this position.

In fact, my senior project demonstrates most of the skills listed in your job description, including written communication skills, analytical abilities, and math aptitude. I enjoyed the opportunity to put my math skills to the test as part of the statistical comparison of various freight modes. The e-portfolio at <http://DaltonSmith.com/eportfolio> shows examples of this work.

As you can see from my résumé, I also have more than three years of part-time experience working with customers in both retail and commercial settings. This experience taught me the importance of customer service, and I want to start my professional career with a company that truly values the customer. In reviewing your website and reading several articles on Lloyd's List and other trade websites, I am impressed by Sea-Air's constant attention to customer service in this highly competitive industry.

My verbal communication skills would be best demonstrated in an interview, of course. I would be happy to meet with a representative of your company at their earliest convenience. I can be reached at dalton.k.smith@gmail.com or by phone at 604-555-3737.

Sincerely,

Dalton Smith

→ The first sentence grabs Attention by indicating knowledge of the company and its industry.

→ The reference to his résumé emphasizes his customer service orientation and also shows he has done his homework by researching the company.

→ The letter doesn't include a handwritten signature because it was uploaded to a website along with his résumé.

← The opening paragraph identifies the specific job for which he is applying.

← In this discussion of his skills, he builds Interest and Desire by echoing the qualifications stated in the job posting.

← In the close, he politely asks for an interview (an Action) in a way that emphasizes yet another job-related skill.

Unsolicited covering letter

655 Crescent Rd.
Newmarket, ON L3Y 2C2
June 16, 2018

Ms. Patricia Downings, Store Manager
GroupShop, Inc.
Orillia Square Mall
Orillia, ON L3V 6H6

Johns gets the
reader's
Attention by
addressing her by
name and by
speaking directly
to her needs.

Dear Ms. Downing:

You want retail clerks and managers who are accurate, enthusiastic, and experienced. You want someone who cares about customer service, who understands merchandising, and who can work with others to get the job done. When you're ready to hire a manager trainee or a clerk who is willing to work toward promotion, please consider me for the job.

Working as a clerk and then as an assistant manager in a large department store has taught me how to anticipate customer problems and deliver the type of service that keeps customers coming back. Moreover, my recent BA degree in retailing, which encompassed such courses as retailing, marketing, management, and business information systems, will provide your store with a well-rounded associate. (Please refer to my enclosed résumé for more information.) You'll find that I'm interested in every facet of retailing, eager to take on responsibility, and willing to continue learning throughout my career.

The close builds
on the reader's
Interest by demon-
strating knowledge of
the company's policy
toward promotion.

I understand that GroupShop prefers to promote its managers from within the company, and I would be pleased to start out with an entry-level position until I gain the necessary experience. Do you have any associate positions opening up soon? Could we discuss my qualifications? I will phone you early next Wednesday to arrange a meeting at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Glenda Johns
Glenda Johns

Enclosure

Johns creates
Interest by
showing the reader
that she has done
some research on
the company and
the position.

The body of the
letter points out
personal qualities
that aren't
specifically stated
in her résumé but
that relate to what
the company is
seeking.

She focuses on the
reader and displays
the "you" attitude,
even though the last
paragraph uses the
word "I."