

WRITING COVER LETTERS FOR VETERANS

Why should I write a cover letter?

A cover letter serves as a good preface to your resume by allowing you to discuss your work ethic and ability to function as a team player, in addition to other attributes you gained while being in the military. It also lets you provide more detail about one or two achievements from your military background or perhaps positions in the civilian world post-service, such as education, community service, or co-ops/internships.

What should be in my cover letter?

A cover letter should be short, get to the point quickly, and make reference to the enclosed resume. It should focus on the fact that your skills are a good match for what the job requires. Use your cover letter to highlight the most important qualifications, experiences, and achievements you bring to that specific company so that the prospective employer doesn't have to search through your resume to find what is most important. Your cover letter supports your resume—it does not repeat it.

What else makes my cover letter different than my resume?

Unlike your resume, your cover letter gives you an opportunity to briefly address why you are making a career transition out of the military and into the civilian workforce. This is especially important if you are making a transition to a career field that is unrelated to the specific jobs you held while in the military.

How should I speak about my military experience?

Unless you know the employer has a preference for veterans, your cover letter should be even more “demilitarized” than your resume. It's important to translate your experience and skill sets into civilian terminology, particularly with explanation for how your military experience is relevant to civilian work.

What should I do when I finish my cover letter?

When it is complete, ask someone else to read over your cover letter to catch any little mistakes and to make sure you convey the right tone. Additionally, have a civilian read your cover letter to see if they understand any parts that discuss your military experience. If he or she can't understand what you did in the service, you need to spell it out more clearly.

Adapted from:

Enelow, W. S., & Kursmark, L. M. (2010). *Expert resumes for military-to-civilian transitions*. Indianapolis, IN: JIST Works.

Shatkin, L. (2013). *150 best jobs for the military-to-civilian transition*. St. Paul, MN: JIST Works.

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

- ❑ Relate the cover letter specifically to the job for which you are applying
- ❑ “Demilitarize” the language of your cover letter by translating skills, experiences, and achievements to civilian terms
- ❑ Address why you are transitioning from the military to civilian work
- ❑ Have at least one person proofread your letter – be sure to check for errors, tone, and comprehension of any military terms
- ❑ Reference your enclosed resume



Cover Letter for Veterans

Paula J. Miller

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June 30, 2014

Ms. Andrea Roberts, Associate Director of Marketing
Vacasa Rentals
3934 NE Martin Luther King Boulevard – Suite 204
Portland, OR 97212

RE: Summer Marketing Intern

Dear Ms. Roberts:

I am currently enrolled at Clark College in Vancouver, WA, working to attain an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Business Administration with a specialization in Marketing. I am interested in beginning a career in advertising upon graduation, and therefore I wish to be considered for the open position at Vacasa Rentals as a summer marketing intern.

Prior to seeking my Associate's Degree, I spent a few years in the United States Marine Corps. While in the military, I learned what it truly means to be an effective and disciplined member of a team. Additionally, I developed outstanding oral communication, leadership, and supervisory skills during my tour of duty as a Marine.

Although my career with the Marine Corps was exceptional and presented me with a variety of wonderful opportunities, my true passion has always been with marketing and advertising. As such, I resigned from the military to obtain a degree so I could acquire the appropriate education and pursue my dream career. During my first year at Clark College I have taken the introductory level marketing and advertising courses, and I would love for this internship to be my first opportunity to apply my newly acquired knowledge of the field. I believe that this position would not only allow me to begin my transition to the civilian workforce, but that I would also be an asset to your company because of the knowledge I gained in the classroom and the transferrable skills I gained in the Marines.

Lastly, I have attached my resume for your review. I greatly anticipate the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss this job opening. I can be reached by phone at **(360) 265-4658** or by email at **pmiller@clark.edu**. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Paula Miller

Paula J. Miller

Enclosure