

Sample Cover Letter: John Jones

Your cover letter is often your first chance to make a good impression on a potential employer, so it should be personalized for each job opportunity and, together with your resume; it should tell a compelling story about who you are, what you have accomplished, and why the potential employer should want to meet you. If you are switching from the for-profit sector to the nonprofit sector, your cover letter can be your most valuable marketing tool.

In this sample cover letter, the job seeker quickly puts the focus on his nonprofit management experience, giving examples of leadership positions he has held and the results he achieved in each position. He effectively uses bullet points to describe his skills and experiences that are directly relevant to the position for which he is applying. Rather than providing excessive detail about his previous positions, John offers highlights and directs the reader to his attached resume for more information. In the final paragraph of his cover letter, John clearly states his overarching leadership qualities and how they align with XYZ's job description.

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Search Committee
XYZ Organization

RE: Vice President Position, ZZ Program

Dear Search Committee:

I am responding to the position announcement for Vice President of the ZZ program at XYZ Organization. I have a combination of experience and skills that I believe match well with what XYZ is seeking for the Vice President of this initiative. A copy of my resume accompanies this cover letter, and I would like to highlight here my qualities and credentials I believe are most relevant to the position.

I have extensive managerial experience in the non-profit sector and a record of success in getting initiatives off the ground and flourishing. Most recently, I served for seven years as Executive Director of an association whose members are engaged in the use of information technology in health care, and prior to that, I spent eleven years as head of a very entrepreneurial nonprofit that provided information systems, training and education, and technology consultation to libraries and information centers in a wide range of settings.

Boston

535 Boylston St., 10th Floor
Boston, MA 02116
P 617 572-2833
F 617 572-2834

New York

112 West 34th St., Suite 1510
New York, NY 10120
P 646 562-8900
F 646 562-8901

San Francisco

465 California St., 11th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
P 415 627-1100
F 415 627-4575

While my resume provides more specifics, my previous positions have enabled me to develop a high level of skill and experience in the following areas that are germane to the Vice President position at XYZ:

- I have created new and innovative programs, extending from inception of an idea, through preparing and presenting persuasive business plans, to developing and implementing the programs and providing the ongoing support structure.
- I have extensive experience in budgeting, in financial monitoring, and in revenue generation activities of all persuasions, including product sales, membership, grants, and corporate sponsorship.
- I have a background of both managerial and hands-on involvement in creating successful publicity and promotional and communications campaigns.
- I have exhibited, in all past positions, a consistent knack for being able to identify, recruit, and hire exceptional staffs, and for establishing highly productive and team-oriented work environments.
- My work has been centered in organizations that have information dissemination and knowledge creation as the focus of their program activity, with leading edge technology playing a key role in the delivery of that information and knowledge.

In my leadership in nonprofit organizations, I have very successfully maneuvered the delicate balance between dedication to mission, the need for bold entrepreneurial initiatives, and the application of sound business management. From your description of what is needed for leadership of ZZ at the Vice-Presidential level, I believe my credentials align well with what you are seeking. I would be pleased to speak with you about my credentials in greater detail at your convenience, or provide any additional information that would be helpful for you in assessing my qualifications. I would be happy to provide salary history or requirements if you feel my candidacy merits the next level of consideration.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John Jones

Bridgestar (www.bridgestar.org), an initiative of the Bridgespan Group, provides a nonprofit management job board, content, and tools designed to help nonprofit organizations build strong leadership teams and individuals pursue career paths as nonprofit leaders.