

TAILOR YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER

Employers look for specific language within the resume and cover letter that highlights your knowledge of their organization, the job posting, and your related skills and experiences. The applicant tracking system (ATS) the organization uses will also scan your application to find key words or phrases that the employer wants to see. The best chance that you have to impress a recruiter and their ATS is to pay close attention to the job description and make it work for you!

Notice the **green** text in the sample job description below. These are the key words that highlight important aspects of the job. In the resume and cover letter examples on the following pages, you will see how these words are used to emphasize these elements on your application.

Sample Job Description

Insurance Sales Representative Position

YYY Company, named a “Best Place to Work” five years in a row, is seeking ambitious candidates for our insurance sales representative position. At YYY Company, we embrace **working as a team** to meet our **clients’ needs** and drive industry leading results. Our goal is to make a **positive impact** for our clients and on the world.

This entry-level sales role will **build relationships** with internal and external **clients** managing the entire sales process including regular **outreach and follow-up**, a **deep understanding** of the product, and the **ability to identify the unique needs** of the client to provide appropriate products. When our clients win, we win.

Preferred Qualifications:

- A **bachelor degree** in related field
- High performers with a history of **academic excellence** and extracurricular achievement
- Advanced written and verbal **communication skills**
- Ability to **work independently** and as **part of a team**
- Capable of **supervising** and directing small project teams
- Strong **problem-solving** and **critical thinking** ability
- A **self-motivated** individual who is able to **increase our engagement with our clients**
- Knowledge of **Microsoft Office** programs
- Experience in **handling financial transactions**
- Fluent in **Spanish** a plus

Rocky The Bull

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September XX, 20XX

YYY Company
1234 McKinley Dr.
Tampa, FL 33612

Dear Hiring Manager,

Please accept this letter and attached resume for the Insurance Sales Representative position at YYY Company. I became aware of this position through Handshake. I am currently working on my Bachelor of Science in Finance at the University of South Florida (USF) and plan to become an insurance sales agent upon graduation. I am eager to apply the skills I developed in my education and work experiences to this role and make a **positive impact on your organization and clients**.

YYY Company's mission to **put its clients first and meet their unique needs** is incredibly important to me. As a Customer Service Associate and Lead Trainer at Winn-Dixie, I strive to apply **positive, trusted service and leadership** to my position every day. As I train new employees, I reinforce our mission to be better every day through **helping our customers by understanding their needs** and **communicating effectively within our team**. I truly believe that my success stems from the achievements of my team, and put an **emphasis on team wins and trust in each other**. In the Insurance Sales Representative position with YYY, this will be useful as I begin to **build relationships with both the team there and with our client base**.

I understand that in order to be a successful sales representative, I must be able to use my **critical thinking skills** to successfully complete tasks given to me in a timely manner. As the Social Committee Chair in the Bulls Business Community, I plan and host events that are both **unique** to the community and inclusive to all business students. My co-chair and I produce innovative ways to engage with community members while measuring the outcomes of these engagement efforts. I created comprehensive spreadsheets using **Microsoft Excel** to track student engagement and then **collaborated** with the Marketing Committee to better promote our events. As a result, we saw a **30% increase in attendance and engagement** over the course of a semester by members who had never attended an event before. I can use the same kinds of problem-solving skills to **excite YYY's client base and increase their engagement** with our services.

My past experience as an effective leader and communicator has allowed me to **build meaningful and productive relationships among my colleagues and customers**, and makes me an ideal candidate for this position. I appreciate you taking the time to review and consider my application. I look forward to speaking with you soon to address any questions you may have about my application.

Sincerely,

Rocky The Bull

Rocky The Bull

TIP: Copy and paste your resume header to your cover letter for consistency.

TIP: Address your letter to a specific individual. If you are not sure of who the hiring manager is, address you can use "Hiring Manager" or "Recruitment Team."

TIP: As you read through the job description, highlight key words. Incorporate these words or phrases as they pertain to your skills and experience. (Shown in green for demonstration purposes only. Do not use green in your resume or cover letter.)

TIP: Draw a connection between the needs of the current job opening and the skills you can bring to the job.

Rocky The Bull

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EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Finance University of South Florida, Tampa FL May 20XX

GPA: **3.96/4.0**

Relevant Coursework: **Advanced Investment Analysis and Management (Current)** | **Systems Analysis and Design (Current)** | **Advanced Corporate Finance (Current)** | Financial Modeling & Analytics | Personal Financial Planning | Financial & Managerial Accounting | Information Systems in Organizations

TIP: Relevant coursework can highlight achievement, knowledge, or skills in areas of interest to the employer.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Citi-USF Global Banking Curriculum Boot Camp May 20XX

- Completed Citi's three-day training program to **enhance understanding** of Global Banking
- Analyzed program material to further refine career interests resulting in a **self-motivated passion** for trade and market operations and risk management

AXA Leadership & Professional Sales Development Program April 20XX-June 20XX

- Selected to be one of ten students to participate in AXA's program led by senior executives
- **Presented** a solution to a sales problem to senior executives using **Microsoft PowerPoint**

TIP: Emphasize significant experience - paid or unpaid - by creating a "Relevant Experience" section.

EXPERIENCE

Customer Service Associate & Lead Trainer Winn-Dixie February 20XX-Present

- Resolved **customer** complaints by being an attentive listener to better **identify their unique needs**
- **Supervise all front end staff and direct teams** of customer service trainees through **handling financial transactions** and customer interactions

TIP: Quantify bullet points or provide examples of tasks performed or what skills you used wherever possible.

INVOLVEMENT

Social Committee Chair Bulls Business Community August 20XX-Present

- Plan exciting events, like the first annual Thanksgiving "Pod-luck," meant to **include all students** within the community
- Track attendance and community engagement with **Microsoft Excel** in **collaboration** with the Marketing Committee
- **Reach out to students** who have low engagement and **follow up with them** to see how we can better **meet their needs** as a community

Member USF Honors College Student Council Volunteer Committee May 20XX-Present

- Quantum Leap Farm (Equine therapy for special needs children and adults)
*Assisted barn manager in organizing current stock room and levels using **Microsoft Excel***
- Making Strides Against Breast Cancer (Fundraising for the American Cancer Society)
***Worked as a team** to raise over \$2000 in one month for cancer research*
- Tampa Bay Welcoming Week (National event highlighting the contributions of immigrants)
*Helped children create cards in **Spanish** to welcome refugee families to the Tampa area*
- Bull Haul (USF Move-In Day experience for first-year students)
*Helped new students and their families move on-campus as part of a small **volunteer team***

TIP: If you held more than one position or participated in more than one activity in an organization, show the progression and save space by listing your membership once.

Treasurer USF Student Finance Association

January 20XX-Present

- Maintain **checking account, student fees, and expenses** for club's growth and sustainability
- **Worked with the executive board** to plan and coordinate and marketing club's events such as monthly meetings and professional business outings

SKILLS

Microsoft Office: Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Access

Language: **Spanish** (fluent)