Survey Cover Letter

A survey cover letter is an invitation for an individual or member of a group to respond to a survey. Failing to send a survey cover letter will likely hinder your success at finding participants.

**Audience:** Respondents to your survey.

**Purpose:** There are four clear purposes: invite participants to participate, explain the study and its importance, gain participation, eliminate faulty contact information.

1. **Goal One** is to convince respondents that a problem exists; that the problem affects the group to which the respondents are members; and that the respondents’ participation is needed to solve the problem.
2. **Goal Two** is to convince the respondents that they will be respected; their answers are confidential; the results are useful; and they may contact the researcher to ask about the study.
3. **Goal Three** is to provide the respondents with satisfaction that they are providing a useful service; you appreciate their time and efforts; and you will notify them of the published material or results of the study.

**Text:** You will write a professional letter attached to an email or sent through the postal service. If you send an email with a letter attached, provide a brief transmittal message in the email. If you send only an email, follow the organization of the professional letter.

**Style:** Write a well-constructed cover letter that is brief, clear, and coherent. Follow the same writing process for writing this letter as you follow for any writing task: collect the information, organize the information, draft the information, revise the information, edit the information, and finally, let a trusted colleague examine the letter for grammar, punctuation, organization, and content.

**Organization:** A survey cover letter can be organized into six distinct sections.

*Paragraph One:* Provides the introductions, problem, and the purpose. Get to the point quickly.

1. You name, title, group affiliation.
2. Identify the problem and relate the problem to the respondents.
3. Convince the respondents their participation is necessary to provide the information to help solve the problem.

*Paragraph Two:* Explain why you chose the respondents.

1. They are a part of a group affected by the problem you are studying.
2. Their input is specific to the group being studied and provides information.
3. Their information will provide researchers with data necessary to solve the problem.
4. They are helping solve the problem.

*Paragraph Three:* Provides the directions for the survey, links to the survey, and your contact information.

1. Provide a time line for answering the survey questions (ten minute, thirty minute, etc.).
2. Name the type of survey.
3. Provide a link to the survey.
4. Provide your name, office number, and email.
Paragraph Four: Compensation for participation

1. If you are paying for the respondents’ participation, provide the information for receiving payment.
2. If you are entering the respondents into a drawing, provide the respondents with dates of drawing.
3. If you are going to provide results of the study, provide a time line.

Paragraph Five: Confidential Clause

1. If you need IRB clearance, you must provide directions for signing the IRB form.
2. Reassure the respondents that their participation will be respected.
3. Reassure the respondents that their responses will be kept confidential.
4. If you are going to name the group or company, you must get permission first.

Paragraph Six: Conclusion

1. Thank the respondents for their time and efforts.
2. Reiterate the importance of the study and how the data will be used to solve problems for that group of respondents.
3. Provide contact information so the respondent can contact you if he or she has questions or concerns.