Transmittal Letter or Cover Letter

Transmittal letters are letters that are sent as an accompaniment for a document such as a report or contract information. Transmittal letters serve as an announcement of the enclosed material. If you are sending the transmittal letter with a report, the transmittal letter is the first element of the front matter.

The transmittal letter serves two important functions:

1. Protection—if your enclosed document does not have a transmittal letter, it could be thrown away.
2. Introduction—your transmittal letter allows you and your company to make a brief contact with the receiver and sets a tone for the reader, which can motivate them to respond positively to your enclosed materials.

Typically transmittal letters, cover letters, and application letters have been grouped together as one type of letter. However, they differ according to the discipline that is using the letter, the purpose of the letter, and the documents they accompany. For the purpose of this resource, a transmittal letter is the letter, email, or memo that is sent for the purpose of introducing specific documents such as a report or contract information. The transmittal letter is brief, to the point, and clearly written.

The transmittal or cover letter has an introduction, body, conclusion, and notations.

1. Introduction—this section is a requirement for all business letters. Think of the introduction in the similar fashion that you enter an office for the first time. You will introduce yourself, shake a hand or two, and tell that person or people why you are in that office.
   • Introduce yourself and your firm.
   • Give the reason for the transmittal letter.
   • Provide the title of the enclosed documents.
   • List any people who may need the information.

2. Body Paragraph—in this section, your goal is to give all the information.
   • Provide the purpose of enclosed document.
   • Provide who it was written for—if there is more than one audience, list them.
   • Provide specific information such as if the document is electronically protected file, make sure you send the password and instructions for opening the document.
   • Provide confirmation of goals and objectives that the enclosed document meets.
   • Provide key information such as an assessment of a possible security breach.

3. Conclusion—this section has an important function in that it provides your reader with your humility, gratitude, and availability for future projects.
   • Acknowledge people who may have provided information, money, or materials—especially from the company in which you are sending the files.
   • Request an action that could verify that the reader received the letter and a deadline for revisions—if you sent a draft. (Drafts are usually interoffice).
   • Provide contact information. Names, titles, emails, phones, physical mail.
End in good will—you should attempt to end every letter, email, or memo with a solid gesture of good will. *I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time and I look forward to future projects*…something that ends the letter on a good note.

After the complimentary closing and your name, remember to note the enclosed documents. Refer to the **Format of Business Letter** resources for how to note enclosures in email, letters, and memos.