

COVER LETTERS

A well written cover letter should always accompany your resume or application. Its purpose is to introduce you and to expand on the experience in your resume. A good cover letter should:

- Include specific information about why you want to work for the employer
- Exemplify solid writing skills and be succinct
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the position
- Align your experience with the desired qualifications of the employer
- Address any potential concerns about your application

Cover Letters for Advertised Listings

1. Know the employer

Research the employer's organization to see how your skills and abilities meet its needs. In your cover letter, show why you are a good fit. Send the letter to a specific person whenever possible; otherwise, use "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Members of the Selection Committee."

2. Analyze the job description

Take a good look at the job responsibilities and qualifications and design your cover letter to match these as much as possible. Often job listings are short and vague. In this case, draw from your experience of similar jobs to infer what skills and abilities might be required.

3. Analyze your background

Think about your background in relation to the job responsibilities and qualifications. Ask yourself, "What have I done that is similar to what this job entails?" Consider courses taken, classroom projects, work experience, summer jobs, internships, volunteer experience, extracurricular involvement, and travel.

Be sure to indicate in the first paragraph what position you're seeking. If a specific person recommended you for or alerted you about the position, include their name in the cover letter, as well as their title. For example "Jason Ryner, your Marketing Manager, recommended that I apply for this position."

Prospecting Letters

If you are inquiring about possible openings, you are sending an Inquiry or Prospecting Letter. Address your letter to a specific individual, usually the person who supervises the functional area where you'd like to work. Be specific as possible about the type of position that interests you. Ideally, your research will reveal the job titles used by this employer. If not, use commonly understood generic job titles in the field.

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST



STOP! Don't submit that cover letter until you have checked off this list!

- Write an original cover letter for each employer and position
- State in the first sentence why you are writing
- Show that you know your career goals and how they relate to the position and the organization
- Make your points succinctly; every point should support your application
- Proofread for typos and accuracy of contact information. Have another set of eyes review it too
- Run Spell Check before you send your final copy, but remember that it does not catch everything
- Follow up with the employer if you hear nothing after 2-3 weeks. Inquire if any further information is needed and reiterate your interest

HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER THAT GOES NOWHERE

- Make your introduction long winded and don't include your job objective to cause confusion about what you're applying for
- Don't proofread your letter or use Spell Check. This is very useful for those who claim to be "detail oriented"
- Ramble on about your experiences without explaining why they are relevant. Don't mention details that will let the employer know that you understand what their company does or what the job entails
- Write more than one page, forcing employers to hunt for your qualifications
- Explain what the employer can do for you, instead of what you can do for them
- Don't encourage the employer to contact you, leave out contact information, and don't sign your name at the end of the letter
- Send the same generic cover letter to all employers

COVER LETTER

suggested content & layout

The following is intended as a guide. Cover letters should be unique and original.

Your street address
City, State Zip Code
Email address
(Area Code) Phone Number
Month Date, Year

Mr./Ms./Dr. First and Last Name of Person
Position or Title
Employer Organization's Name
Employer Street Address/P.O. Box
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name of Addressee:

Tell the reader why you are writing (i.e., regarding the position in which you are interested; if appropriate, indicate how you learned of the position and/or organization). Make a general statement about being a good candidate for the job.

Explain why you have targeted this particular organization: in so doing, demonstrate your knowledge of its products, services and operations. (This means you must research the potential employer.) Stress what you have to offer, not what you want from, the employer. Identify those parts of your experience (paid or non-paid) which will be of interest to this employer. Students and recent graduates should draw attention to relevant course work, special projects and campus activities. In some cases, you will add detail to items included in your resume. Refer the reader to your enclosed resume for additional information.

Demonstrate your understanding of the duties of the position in which you are interested, and state how your unique qualifications fit the position. Request an interview appointment, or tell the reader that you will contact him/her soon in order to see if you can schedule a mutually convenient appointment. If the employer is some distance away, indicate when you would be available for an interview. (For example, if you will be traveling to the employer's location during an academic holiday, indicate the days you will be in that area.) Thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sign Your Name Here

Type your name

Enclosure

The simplest way to lay out your cover letter is to align all text to the left. Not only is it simple, but it looks professional and polished.