

THE COVER LETTER

The cover letter is a one-page business letter that **markets you** to potential employers. **ALWAYS** enclose a cover letter when you mail or e-mail your resume. The letter accompanies your resume in all situation, except when you are physically handing your resume to the interviewer.

Your major purpose in writing the cover letter is to interest the employer enough to grant you an interview. A well-written cover letter can assist you to:

- persuade the potential employer to read your resume.
- relate your particular skills and qualifications to the requirements of the job by highlighting the appropriate accomplishments stated in your resume.
- demonstrate your knowledge of the organization by making reference to your company research.
- initiate future communication with the potential employer.

Think about the following points when writing your cover letter:

1. Address the letter to a specific person by name, when possible. If you do not know to whom to write, call the company operator for the name of the appropriate individual. Researching the company on the web may provide you the contact information on the Human Resources or Investor Relations webpage.
2. Use simple, direct language and correct grammar. Type your letter neatly on standard size (8-1/2" x 11") resume quality bond paper that matches your resume. If you are e-mailing your cover letter and resume, use 1-1/2 in margins to insure that the words are all contained in the message. Use the US Postal Service, Fed Ex or UPS to mail your resume to insure that it arrives looking professional in a flat 9"x12" envelope. If your resume is scanned after it arrives via snail mail, the folds in your resume and cover letter may appear to the scanning device as dark lines and obstruct some of the verbiage included in the context of your application.
3. Let your letter reflect your individuality, but avoid appearing cute, aggressive, familiar or humorous. You are writing to a stranger about a serious subject -- you! Your cover letter displays your polished business writing skills. Make it work for you!
4. Write your letter in terms of what you can do in the future for this organization. Refer to your resume by elaborating on one or more of your stated qualifications/accomplishments. Do not exaggerate your experience or accomplishments, but do not hide what you have done. Be honest! You need to be your #1 sales agent. Be **positive** about your qualifications and talents.
5. Limit your cover letter to one page of 4 or 5 brief paragraphs. Be precise and concise.
6. When answering an advertisement, cover all of the points requested in the ad in the exact order outlined, because some prospective employer use those directions to test the applicant's ability to follow instructions precisely.
7. **CREATE A DIFFERENT COVER LETTER FOR EACH APPLICATION! This means that you have to WRITE an individually designed cover letter for each position for which you are applying.** When mailing a cover letter with your masterpiece resume, print it on good quality watermarked bond paper stock such as a Classic Laid or Linen Finish. There are several colors in watermarked bond paper available; suggested colors for printed resumes include white, buff, light tan, ivory, pale yellow and pale gray. Always bring several hard copies of your resume to an interview.

For resumes that are "uploaded" from a word document to accompany your cover letter, make sure you are attaching the "correct version." Use a daily date, a letter cue or some identifying technique to insure you are sending the appropriate resume for the opportunity you are seeking.

An important note about e-mailing resumes, cover letters, and job applications:

It is efficient to respond to the employer's request using e-mail, however, send yourself copy of the letter and resume **PRIOR** to sending it to the employer.

- **To prevent** erroneously sending your letter as you are writing it and before you are ready to "send", **do not include the e-mail address in the "To Box" until you are ready to send it.**

It is virtually impossible to "recall" a mistakenly sent resume and cover letter.

(In some word processing programs, touching the "tab" key automatically sends your e-mail -- **be careful.**)

An employer wants to think his or her own company is the most important organization in your job search.

Note: Keep a "hard copy file" of every cover letter you send in a safe space.

Keep your applications organized on your computer. Start a folder for each organization and include a copy of all of your correspondence and attachments in one place.

8. The cover letter elicits the first impression that the employer has of you. Therefore, your cover letter must be neat, and have **no typographical or grammatical errors**. Make it "letter" perfect. **Proofread** and edit your letter carefully. Then **re-read** it from the employer's perspective: "Why should I hire you?"

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

YOUR NAME

Street Address
City State Zip Code
(Area Code) Telephone Number
e-mail address

Date of Writing

Mr. or Ms. Employer
Title of Employer
Organization
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
E-mail address if sending electronically
Fax number if communicating by fax

Dear Mr. and Ms. Employer:

1st Paragraph: Tell why you are writing, usually to apply for a position. Name the position, field or general area about which you are inquiring. Tell how you heard of the opening or organization. If a current employee suggested that you follow-up on this opening, include his or her name here. If you heard of the opening through a newspaper, website, database website, or other form of advertisement, include the publication and the date.

2nd Paragraph: Mention one or two qualifications that you think would be of greatest interest to the employer, addressing your remarks to his/her point of view. Tell why you think you are particularly interested in the organization or the type of work after having researched the organization's website(s). If you have had related experience or some specialized training, point it out. Expand on the information stated in your resume. If you have extensive experience for this opportunity, you can use an additional paragraph to elaborate on these accomplishments and transferable skills.

3rd Paragraph: If appropriate, state information requested in the advertisement. If an application is enclosed, include the specifics of what is requested to complete your file.

4th Paragraph: Close by making a specific request for an interview, if you plan to be in the geographic area of the company. Suggest a specific date and time that you will telephone to establish an appointment, (unless you hear beforehand that the reader does not wish to grant you an interview). You may state: I will call, e-mail, or text your office on day, date (one week from the day you mail or e-mail the letter) to confirm a convenient time for an interview. (Do not forget to call, e-mail or text!) Make sure that your closing statement is positive and makes a request for a specific action from the reader. If you do not have information about this organization from their website, then specifically ask for it at this time. Thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature)

/s/ (you can use a "script" font to sign your on-line letter)

Type your name

Attachments: Resume
References