



An effective cover letter is as important in the job search as an effective resume. It serves as an introduction to your resume and no resume should be sent without one. Employers often use cover letters as the initial screening tool in deciding whom to interview.

Where the resume is the selling tool, the cover letter or letter of application is designed with the goal of obtaining an interview. The cover letter allows you to expand on the resume and personalize your approach. A good cover letter expresses that you are seeking a more personal conversation about possible employment. It should draw a connection between the needs of the current job opening and the skills you can bring to the job. The cover letter is intended to summarize, mention particular points, provide additional information and ask for an interview.

DOs and DON'Ts FOR DESIGNING YOUR PROFESSIONAL COVER LETTER

DO

- Enclose a cover letter when you mail a resume.
- Use effective formatting rules.
- Follow the standard personal business letter format.
- Keep jargon to a bare minimum.
- Keep your cover letter interesting, concise and to the point.
- Personalize your letter.
- Write and type each cover letter individually for each employer.
- Address your letter to a specific person in the organization.
- Refer to the employer as either Mr. or Ms.
- Communicate your interest.
- Identify the desired position or type of position for which you are applying.
- Focus on your skills, training or experience that relate to the position.
- Communicate enthusiasm and motivation.
- Refer briefly to your resume or additional enclosures.
- Request an interview at the employer's convenience.
- Proofread the letter carefully for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.

DON'T

- Exceed one page of approximately three to four paragraphs.
- Use long, complicated words.
- Make reference to salary unless request by employer.
- Use script, bold fonts and heavy typefaces.
- Use an informal writing style.

Tips to Remember:

- Cover letters follow the same general rules of resumes—specific, concise and error-free.
- Always enclose a cover letter when you mail a resume.
- Cover letters will be read quickly, so it must be brief, informative and hold the reader's attention.
- Each letter should be individualized for the specific company and position you are applying for.

(Continued on reverse)

GENERAL OUTLINE FOR A COVER LETTER

Your Mailing Address
City, State Zip Code
Phone Number
Date of Letter

Employer's Name
Employer's Title
Organization Name
Mailing Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Ms. Name:

OPENING PARAGRAPH: State why you are writing, the name of the position or type of work for which you are applying, and mention how you heard about the opening.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S): Explain why you are interested in working for this employer and specify your reasons for desiring this type of work. If you have had relevant work experience or related education, be sure to point it out, but do not reiterate your entire resume. Emphasize skills or abilities you have that relate to the job for which you are applying. Be sure to do this in a confident manner and remember that the reader will view your letter of application as an example of your writing skills.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Refer the reader to your enclosed resume or additional media you are using to illustrate your training, interests and experience. Tell the employer from where your credentials may be requested. Have an appropriate closing to pave the way for the interview by indicating the action or steps you will take to initiate an interview date. Indicate you are available for a personal interview at the employer's convenience or show your motivation by telling the employer you will be in contact with them.

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure(s)