

An Orientation to Writing Effective Cover Letters

A guide to understanding the importance of the cover letter in the job application process

Purposes of a Cover letter

- ▶ The cover letter is a professional letter written to an employer that introduces you and how your skills relate to the position vacancy
- ▶ The cover letter is used to help sell your skills to the employer so that they will get a clear sense of why they should hire you

A properly written letter will entice an employer to read further and look at your resume

The cover letter should help market your best assets in relation to the position

Ten Cover letter basics

- ▶ The cover letter should start with the date, written as ex:

January 22, 2010

- ▶ After the date, you should leave a double space and type your contact address and email as ex:

45 Ace Drive

Anytown, NC 99998

anyperson@yahoo.com

- ▶ Leave a double space and enter the employer's contact name and address as ex:

Acme Widget Company

John T. Doe, Personnel Manager

123 Any Street

Alltown, NC 99999

Ten cover letter basics continued...

- ▶ After typing the employer's address, leave a double space and type your salutation as ex:

Dear Mr./Mrs. John Doe, or if you do not know a specific person, To Whom It May Concern:

(use a colon when you do not know the person and a comma when the person is known to you)

- ▶ Leave a double space
- ▶ You have completed the first 4 steps and you are now ready to type the body of your cover letter

Step 5, The first paragraph

- ▶ The first paragraph is stating a purpose for your letter
- ▶ You should identify why you are writing with regards to the specific job vacancy and how your skills relate to the position requirements
- ▶ Leave a double space between each paragraph and your closing
- ▶ Ex:

Please accept my interest in the position of Administrative Assistant III with ABC Widget Company, Inc. My background in administrative office systems as well as my degree in Office Systems Technology makes me the ideal candidate for this position. My resume is enclosed for your review.

Step 6 2nd Paragraph

- ▶ The second paragraph is the bulk of your letter
- ▶ You must spell out why you are the best choice for the position and how you are qualified based on the job announcement
- ▶ Highlight your best qualifications and personal attributes related to the job
- ▶ Example:

My experience includes ten years of office clerical and computer data entry in human resources and records administration with MYZ Services, Inc. I have been responsible for the daily management and supervision of both large and small offices and developed training seminars for new staff. I am well versed in payroll record keeping, budget preparation and in working with other departments to ensure that records are accurate and timely. Additionally, I completed my Associate's degree in Office Systems Technology in 2008 and graduated in the top 5% of my class.

Step 7, 3rd paragraph

- ▶ The second to last paragraph sets the “hook”
- ▶ Use this paragraph to simply set the tone that your qualifications are deserving of further review and that you welcome the opportunity to talk further about your background

- ▶ Example:

I feel that my diverse work experience in office and clerical systems makes me well suited to the Administrative Assistant III position with your organization. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you in person at your convenience.

Step 8, The Closing Paragraph

- ▶ When closing your letter, you are providing your contact information and phone numbers since this is last part of the letter that the employer will read before deciding to investigate you further for an interview
- ▶ The closing paragraph should include your phone number, email(if not stated already at the top in your address) and when you can be reached
- ▶ Example:

Thank you for your consideration for an interview regarding this position. I may be reached by phone at (999) 123-4567 at your convenience or at the email address myname@yahoo.com.

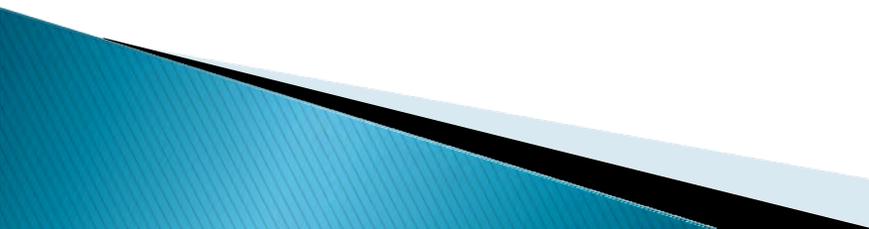
Step 9, The Closing

- ▶ The closing of your letter should always be one of the following: Very truly yours, Sincerely, or Respectfully
- ▶ Leave a quadruple space(hit return 4 times after the closing)

▶ Example:

Sincerely,

John M. Doe



Step 10, Proof and Sign off

- ▶ Print and proofread!
 - ▶ Check to see that your letter is centered properly on the page with the same top and bottom margins
 - ▶ Check for misspelled words, grammar or punctuation mistakes
 - ▶ Save your letter for future reference
 - ▶ Be sure to hand sign your name between the closing and your typed name once you print your final copy for mailing
 - ▶ If you will be emailing your résumé and cover letter, a signature is not required, however you may sign electronically by using a cursive font or using your PAINT tool in WORD to create a signature for insertion
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