



WRITING AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

CONTENT

Writing an effective cover letter that gets you noticed by employers can be done by following a few simple steps. Rule number 1 - Write a fresh cover letter for each job. It might be faster and easier to take the cover letter you wrote for your last application, change the name of the company, and send it off. But most employers want to see that you are truly excited about the specific position and company, which means creating a custom letter for each position you apply for.

Header: Your name, your e-mail address, recipient's details and date

As with many standard business letters, you should include a few pieces of information at the top of your cover letter. As most likely you will be emailing the letter, include your name, phone number and email address. If you are posting the letter include your postal address too. Next, include the date of the day you are sending the letter. After the date, you will list the recipient's name and information.

Salutation: Include the Hiring Manager's name

Try and avoid generic salutations like "To Whom it May Concern" or "Dear Sir or Madam" as they sound stiff and archaic. Review the contact on LinkedIn for more information. If you cannot figure out the specific hiring manager's name, try addressing your cover letter to the head of the department for the role you are applying for.

First paragraph: What job are you applying for and where did you find it?

Write an introductory paragraph that includes the position you are applying for. This is about context. Helping the hiring manager immediately understand where you have come from and which job you are applying for and where it was advertised. Explain why you are writing; make sure it entices them to read on. Consider introducing yourself with a snappy first sentence that highlights your excitement about the company you are applying to, and your passion for the work you do.

Second paragraph: Give an overview of your relevant experience

Your second paragraph should be a brief overview of your background as is relevant to the position. Quickly sum up why you are right for this job. Talk about your overall relevant experience and passion for the company or role specifically. For example, if you are applying for an admin job with a publishing company you could say:

"I have over five years' experience in administration within the publishing industry, meaning I have first-hand insight into the publishing process."

Third paragraph: Pick your top specific achievements and why are you a great fit

A common pitfall many job seekers fall into is to use their cover letter to regurgitate what is on their CV. Do not simply repeat yourself: "I was in charge of identifying and re-engaging former clients." Instead, expand on those bullet points to paint a fuller picture of your experiences and accomplishments, and show off why you would be perfect for the job and the company.





Include key achievements, skills and specialties that make you particularly suited to perform well in the position. Focus on one or two and provide specific details about your success including measurable impacts you made. Pay close attention to keywords listed in the job description and include those that you identify within the body of your cover letter. You should only include information about your most recent one or two professional experiences. It can be tempting to list every single achievement, but instead you need to choose one relevant achievement to highlight. Ask yourself: what have I done that would impress a recruiter? For example: "In my current role, I am responsible for a team of five and have increased productivity by 15% in just one year."

Fourth paragraph: Express enthusiasm about an interview

It is professional to be up-front and express enthusiasm about your desire to proceed to an interview. Employers will appreciate that you are a serious candidate.

Closing and Signature

There are various ways you can close a cover letter, depending on the formality level and whether or not you have addressed the person by name. If you addressed the letter to a specific person, sign off "yours sincerely", and if you addressed generically, use "yours faithfully". Signing the letter adds a nice personal touch, be it with a handwritten signature or an e-signature.

CHOOSING A TEMPLATE

It can be tough starting anything from scratch, so take a look at some sample cover letters on the web. Make sure to pick a design that fits the role you are applying for.

Use a template appropriate for the role

Even if the content on your cover letter is perfect, a badly designed cover letter can do more harm than good. Use a cover letter template built for your role to not only make it quicker and easier to create, but to make sure your cover letter looks great, too.

Research the company you are applying to work at

A company's website and the job ad itself can give you great insight into how to write your cover letter. Take note of:

- The tone and language - is it professional and logical, or creative?
- The length of the paragraphs and sentences - is it short and to the point, or wordy?
- The job application instructions - what have they specifically asked for?

You can then mirror this style in your cover letter to make sure it is appropriate and will resonate with the company you are applying for a role with.

