

How to write an effective Cover Letter

There are two main reasons why you should include a cover letter with your resume. It tells the potential employer what position you are applying for and it gives you another opportunity to sell yourself and your credentials.

The most effective cover letters are those which are specifically tailored for the job you are applying for. Generic cover letters are never a good idea.

Here's How:

1. Start by making sure that you have the proper company name, address, and contact name included on the top of each letter you send. If the job posting did not give a contact name, try calling the company to get one. If the posting prohibits phone calls, use "Dear Hiring Manager" instead of the generic "To Whom it May Concern".
2. The first paragraph is your introduction and should explain the reason why you are writing. The title of the job you are seeking along with the name of the publication in which you saw the job posting should appear. If you were referred by a common party, be sure to mention that as well. The last sentence of your introduction should express your interest in the job and confidence in your ability to do it.
3. The body of your letter should explain why you meet or exceed the requirements of the desired position. The easiest way to do this is to know what the employer is looking for. If the job posting indicated a need for someone who can work unsupervised, describe yourself as a self-starter with proven initiative. Do your best to relate the job requirements to your skills and experiences.
4. Keep your conclusion short and simple. Express your interest once more and repeat your confidence in your ability to do the job. Finish by indicating that you will be in contact to determine the next step. End with a professional closure. "Sincerely" is the most common and normally the most appropriate.

Tips:

1. Unless requested, salary requirements should never be brought up. If they were requested, your best bet is to acknowledge the request without going into any detail. Indicate that you will be happy to discuss salary requirements once mutual interest has been established.
2. Degrees, credentials, or specialized training should also be concluded in the body of your cover letter. You don't want to repeat your resume word for word, but you do want to highlight your qualifications.