

Writing a Cover Letter

The letter of interest is also called a “prospecting letter” and with good reason. It’s a type of cover letter you write when you’re searching for a golden job opportunity. The letter of interest is your first chance to make a good impression on a prospective employer.

Letters of interest are written to express your interest in working for a particular company in a specific field. Your letter may be written either in response to a job opening or just to investigate possible employment.

Human resource departments receive dozens of letters of interest each week. However, make your letter stand out from the crowd using the following tips:

1. Before you write, do your homework. Research the background of the company and familiarize yourself with their products and/or services.
2. Be sure to find out the name of the individual who does the hiring. Address your letter to his/her attention and use her/his name in the salutation. “To Whom It May Concern” and “Dear Sir or Madam” are both outdated and considered to be lazy or even rude.
3. Start your introductory paragraph with the reason you are interested in pursuing employment with this company. Try not to start the first sentence with “I”. (See sample letter of interest.) Also, explain what prompted your inquiry, such as a classified advertisement, a media article or interview, or a referral from an employee.
4. In the next paragraph(s), give specific examples of your qualifications. Don’t hesitate to indicate the reasons why you would be an asset to the company. Illustrate your skills, strengths, and achievements in a professional, yet personable way. Stay away from strings of abbreviated credentials. These, if you have them, should be on the resume you’ll enclose with the letter. Direct the reader to your resume and any other enclosures.

5. In your final paragraph, thank the individual for his/her time in considering you as a new employee. Indicate a precise time when you will contact him/her by phone to follow up on your letter. Also, be sure to let the individual know how to contact you.

Like any business letter, use an A4 dimension paper and follow a business letter format. Keep your letter short, no more than a single page. Remember to check it thoroughly for errors in spelling, grammar and to be sure it addresses each point you wanted to make.