

Cover Letter

This guide will provide you with the information that you need to write your cover letter. There are tips, tools and examples for you to review. When you have a draft please come by our office or email it so we can help you with any revisions!



Contact Us:

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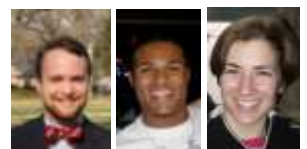
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Office of Career Programs & Student Development
3rd Floor Springs Campus Center



Getting your Cover Letter started...

Your cover letter is an important element of your job search process. Most people spend the majority of their time working on their resume but the fact of the matter is that the employer is never going to look at your resume unless your cover letter is strong.

Purpose

Before starting your cover letter it is important to understand the purpose for the cover letter.

- **Grab the reader's attention and get them to read your resume**-The CL get's your foot in the door. A strong cover letter will peek the readers interest and make them want to learn more about you.
- Customize to show how you can meet the specific employers needs-You can use the cover letter to emphasize how you meet the employers needs in a more specific way than on your resume.
- Highlight what separates you out from the others-Use the CL to show what makes your unique. How do you stand out from the rest?
- Show that you can communicate clearly through writing (Spelling and grammar MATTER!!) A simple mistake in your cover letter could result in you getting over looked. Show the employer that you can write and that you are someone who pays attention to detail by carefully checking your letter for errors.

Quick Tips

- Copy and paste your heading from your resume on to you cover letter so that they match and look like they belong together
- Use the job description to highlight key words and phrases
- Have a few people read it over before submitting

Develop Your Cover Letter

Box #, Presbyterian College

Clinton, South Carolina 29325

Date

Name of Addressee

Title

Name of Company

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. . . . *(Always try to use a name here when you can. If you can't find the name, call HR and ask)*

First Paragraph:

1. **Begin with an interesting opening sentence. (Avoid starting the sentence with "I")**
2. Describe the specific position or type of work for which you are applying.
3. State resource (news, media, friend, Placement Office, etc.) where you learned of the opportunity.

Indicate why you are interested in the position, the company, its products or services.

Second Paragraph:

Explain what qualities make you a good candidate for the position.

1. Academic background/preparation.
2. Practical related work experience (point out specific achievements or unique qualifications, mention internship experience, related research, etc.).

Special skills required (computer ability, foreign languages, accounting, etc.).

Try not to repeat the information in the resume, but expand on it. Make your resume come to life!

Third Paragraph:

Tie it all together!

1. This paragraph should be all about what you can do for the employer.
2. Why are you the one they should hire?
3. How will they benefit from having you as a part of their team? What makes you unique?

Final Paragraph: (this should be very short)

1. Refer the reader to the enclosed resume.
2. Indicate your desire for a personal interview and your flexibility as to the time and place.
3. Repeat your phone number/email in the letter and offer any assistance to help in a speedy response.
4. Answer the question of what happens next. Close your letter with a statement or question which will encourage a response. This can be accomplished by asking for more specific information about the position, the company, or the geographic area, or by requesting recruitment literature.

Indicate that you will follow up your letter with a phone call to arrange an interview.

Sincerely,

(don't forget to sign your name!)

Your Name

Type Your Name

Get Started!

Use this form to brainstorm and get your cover letter started. Remember to use the job description to match your skills to the qualifications the employer is looking for.

Dear: _____

Paragraph 1

I would like to apply for the position of _____

Paragraph 2

My relevant experience for the position includes

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Paragraph 3

I believe that I would be an asset to your organization because

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Paragraph 4

The enclosed resume further describes my qualifications. Please contact me if you have any additional questions or would like to schedule an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Signature

Type Name

Enclosure

Cover Letter Greatness

Good, better, best; never let it rest till your good is better and your better is best.

Unknown

Most people don't take the time to write dynamite cover letters that lift them head and shoulders above the competition. When you understand the basics of cover letter writing, it isn't that much more effort to write really great cover letters. Here's how:

If you attended a prestigious university or worked for a pedigree (Fortune 100) company, include that information early in the cover letter in order to establish credibility and respect.

If you have a good networking contact (referral source), make sure that you do some legitimate "name-dropping" in order to establish a friendlier (potentially more informal) tone.

Don't be afraid to toot your own horn, but don't overdo it. The key here is to identify and elaborate on specific skills and accomplishments that will impress-and potentially be useful to-the hiring manager.

Put words in other people's mouths. In other words, use quotes from your references (with their permission, of course) that reflect some special dimensions of your character and work ethic.

Don't be afraid to be original. When it comes to cover letters, a little creativity goes far. For example, you might try creating two columns in your letter to demonstrate how precisely you meet the employer's requirements:

Your requirements

5 years retail sales experience

My qualifications

6 years as sales associate

and sales manager for Bloomingdales

Ten Cover Letter Don'ts

By Kim Isaacs, Monster Resume Expert

Your cover letter is the first thing employers see when they open your materials. Avoid these 10 mistakes, and make your first impression a good and lasting one.

Mistake #1: Don't Overuse "I"

Your cover letter is not your autobiography. The focus should be on how you meet an employer's needs, not on your life story. Avoid the perception of being self-centered by minimizing your use of the word "I," especially at the beginning of your sentences.

Mistake #2: Don't Use a Weak Opening

Job seekers frequently struggle with how to begin a cover letter. This often results in a feeble introduction lacking punch and failing to grab the reader's interest. Consider this example:

- Weak: Please consider me for your sales representative opening.
- Better: Your need for a top-performing sales representative is an excellent match to my three-year history as a #1-ranked, multimillion-dollar producer.

Mistake #3: Don't Omit Your Top Selling Points

A cover letter is a sales letter that sells you as a candidate. Just like the resume, it should be compelling and give the main reasons why you should be called for an interview. Winning cover letter strategies include emphasizing your top accomplishments or creating subheadings culled from the job posting. For example:

Your Ad Specifies: Communication skills

I Offer: Five years of public speaking experience and an extensive background in executive-level report.

Your Ad Specifies: The need for a strong computer background.

I Offer: Proficiency in all MS Office applications with additional expertise in Web site development and design.

Mistake #4: Don't Make It Too Long

If your cover letter exceeds one page, you may be putting readers to sleep. Keep it concise but compelling, and be respectful of readers' time.

Ten Cover Letter Don'ts (cont.)

Mistake #5: Don't Repeat Your Resume Word for Word

Your cover letter shouldn't regurgitate what's on your resume. Reword your cover letter statements to avoid dulling your resume's impact. Consider using the letter to tell a brief story, such as "My Toughest Sale" or "My Biggest Technical Challenge."

Mistake #6: Don't Be Vague

If you're replying to an advertised opening, reference the specific job title in your cover letter. The person reading your letter may be reviewing hundreds of letters for dozens of different jobs. Make sure all the content in your letter supports how you will meet the employer's specific needs.

Mistake #7: Don't Forget to Customize

If you're applying to a number of similar positions, chances are you're tweaking one letter and using it for multiple openings. That's fine, as long as you are customizing each one.

Don't forget to update the company, job and contact information -- if Mr. Jones is addressed as Mrs. Smith, he won't be impressed.

Mistake #8: Don't End on a Passive Note

When possible, put your future in your own hands with a promise to follow up. Instead of asking readers to call you, try a statement like this: I will follow up with you in a few days to answer any preliminary questions you may have. In the meantime, you may reach me at (555) 555-5555.

Mistake #9: Don't Be Rude

Your cover letter should thank the reader for his time and consideration.

Mistake #10: Don't Forget to Sign the Letter

It is proper business etiquette (and shows attention to detail) to sign your letter. However, if you are sending your cover letter and resume via email or the Web, a signature isn't necessary.

Keep in mind how many cover letters hiring managers read. Make sure you follow these guidelines and make your cover letter stand out above the rest. It could mean the difference between getting an interview or not!

This article is from Monster.com. They have some other good job search tools so check it out!

Examples

Box 5000, Presbyterian College
Clinton, SC 29325
February 5, 1998

Ms. Jill Smith, Recruiting Manager
Blue Chip Publishing Company
123 Main Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29325

Dear Ms. Smith:

As a graduation senior at Presbyterian College, I am writing to express my interest in being considered for the position of Editorial Assistant with Blue Chip Publishing. John Jones, a PC graduate employed with Blue Chip, suggested that I contact you.

My educational background includes significant experience in writing and editing. In high school, I served as Features Editor of *The Bugle*, voted three times “best high school weekly” by the South Carolina State Press. At PC, I have served as Sports Editor and Opinions Columnist of our campus newspaper, the *Blue Stocking*. Professors have often asked me to read and edit research materials for publication. In addition, my internship with Sandlapper Magazine sharpened my editing skills and heightened my interest in the field of publishing.

My resume is enclosed for your review. I will be in Charleston from March 3rd through 7th and would like very much to talk with you personally. I will call to arrange a convenient time. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ben Center
Enclosure

Box 0000, Presbyterian College
Clinton, South Carolina 29325
February 16, 1998

Ms. Jenny Smith
Assistant Program Director, Trinity Center
Sound to Sea Environmental Education Program
P.O. Drawer 380
Salter Path, North Carolina 28575

Dear Ms. Smith.

Your opening for an Environmental Educator, which I read about in *The Job Seeker* in our Career Services Office, interests me for several reasons. First I have a strong desire to work to improve our environment. I truly enjoy working with people of all ages and would love the opportunity to share my excitement about environmental issues with others. In addition, the fact that Trinity Center is a highly service-oriented organization permits me to believe that my values would complement your goals.

In May, I will receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Presbyterian College with a minor in Biology. My course work has included emphasis on the environment through biologic, economic, and philosophic disciplines. I had the opportunity during **the fall semester to monitor the City of Clinton's recycling program. Another student and I** created the experiment for our Environmental Science class, the results of which were presented to the City Council. This experience allowed me not only to create a project, but to work in an unsupervised situation. Additionally, I have learned to work professionally and have gained experience in making presentations to large groups.

I have enclosed my resume and ask that you send me an application and any available literature about the Trinity Center. I am very eager to arrange a personal interview and am flexible regarding the time and place. My plans are to be at the North Carolina coast during the first week of March. I look forward to hearing from you and will call within two weeks to make definite plans to meet with you.

Sincerely,

Natalie Netterman

JACKIE SUMMERS

503 S. Broad St. Clinton, SC 29325— Home Phone (864) 833-8380— jhsummers@presby.edu

March 24, 2009

Mrs. Jane Downison
453 Sunshine Lane
Columbia, SC 29763

Dear Mrs. Downison,

Please accept this letter and my enclosed resume as a sincere indication of my interest in the **position of Management Trainee at Smith Inc.** I discovered this posting on Presbyterian College's job search site and was immediately drawn to it because of the reliable reputation of your company. After reviewing the job description I believe that my education, experience and upbeat attitude make me an ideal candidate for your position.

In May, I will be graduating cum laude with a degree in Business Administration from Presbyterian College. My education here at Presbyterian College, paired with the experiences I had in my internships over the last two summers have shown me that I would like to pursue a management position. As an intern at CJLander, a small marketing company, I got to experience many aspects of management. I worked closely with my supervisor to understand the basic concepts of management and supervision. In addition to this experience, I also learned the importance of customer service and satisfaction at my internship working for Target. As the intern there I dealt with many disgruntled customers each day and worked to solve their problems. After this experience, I have gained patience, the ability to think quickly and solve problems on the spot.

If hired by Smith Inc., your company will be gaining a dedicated and enthusiastic employee. I am willing to work until the job is done right, which means that the customer walks away happy and excited to come back and work with us again. Being a good team player will be essential to this role and if selected to be a part of the Management Trainee program I will be just that. If you need a positive, upbeat, enthusiastic trainee, then I will be a good fit for Smith Inc.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you to further discuss my qualifications for this position. It is best to reach me at (864) 833-8380 or by email at jhsummers@presby.edu. I will be in touch next week to see if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jackie Summers

Enclosure: Resume