

Cover Letters & Thank-you Notes

Anytime a résumé is sent by mail it must be accompanied by a cover letter. The résumé is an impersonal description of your qualifications, much like a product brochure. The cover letter is your opportunity to personalize your résumé and target your skills to that specific employer.

The effective job seeker will not send the same résumé for each new job opportunity, but will tailor it for each situation. Likewise, the same cover letter cannot be used in every situation. It also must be customized for each opportunity. There are a variety of cover letter formats, some of which are described below.

Invited Letter - This format is used whenever an employer has asked for a résumé. This is often in response to a want-ad or publicized job listing. This style focuses on matching your qualifications to the advertised requirements of the position.

Uninvited or Cold Contact Letter - This letter is used to contact employers who have not advertised job openings. The focus is on matching your qualifications to the perceived needs of the employer based on labor market research. This strategy requires that a phone or personal contact with the employer either precede or follow the sending of the résumé and cover letter.

Referral Letter - Use this format to contact employers to whom you have been referred through networking and informational interviews. The referral may be to a specific job opening (advertised or unadvertised) or to an employer who may not be hiring. In a referral let-

ter the individual who provided the referral is mentioned in the letter.

The Executive Briefing Letter -

This is a variation on the traditional cover letter. This letter gets right to the point and makes life easier for the recruiter. This letter is often the weapon of choice because:

1. The initial résumé screener might have little understanding of the job or its requirements.
2. Your general résumé invariably needs customizing for any specific job. Overly broad résumés are like “one-size-fits-all” clothes; one size usually fits none.
3. Your résumé is somewhat out of date and you have to send something out immediately to take advantage of the opportunity of a lifetime.

Résumé screeners like people who make life a little easier for them. Using this letter format increases the odds of your résumé getting through to the right people since there is usually no question whether or not you qualify for the job. If you are not sure what the job requirements are, do not forget the employment advertisements, position descriptions, phone conversations with the employer, and informational interviews.

Cover Letter Reminders -

Whenever possible, address the cover letter to a specific person by name and title. This requires a minimum of research that will ultimately pay off in more interviews. The only time this may not be possible is when responding to a “

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Cover Letter “Do’s”

- DO sign the letter in blue ink. It implies the letter is original. The only other color ink to use is black. Never use any other color on the cover letter.
- DO structure the letter to reflect your personality, but avoid being overbearing, humorous, or cute.
- DO keep it brief, about three to five paragraphs.
- DO use the same paper stock for both your cover letter and résumé.

RACHEL JONES

2233 Main Street
Anytown, VA 23505
(804) 550-3342

(Date)

Mr. John Doe
Human Resource Manager
Box 8776
Anytown, NY 01223

Dear Mr. Doe:

I was very pleased to learn of the need for an Administrative Assistant in your company from your recent advertisement in the *Anytown Times*. I believe I have the qualities you are seeking:

Your needs:
Independent Self-Starter

My Qualifications:
Developed tracking system for legislative issues; served as liaison between legislators and department personnel.

Computer Experience

Utilized Word Perfect and Office Suite 8 in preparing reports, tables, correspondence, flyers and other documents.

5 Years Office Experience

Over 6 years office experience; two years experience as Office Manager.

Good oral and written communication skills

Trained four new receptionists on answering phones professionally and on drafting correspondence.

I believe this background provides the skills you require for this position. I have enclosed my resume for your review. I would welcome the opportunity for a personal interview to further discuss my qualifications and will call on (date) to follow-up.

Yours truly,

Rachel Jones
Enclosure

From "Cover Letters that Knock 'Em Dead," by Martin Yate.

Sample Cover Letter

First Paragraph: State the reason for writing. Name the specific position or type of work for which you are applying.

Second Paragraph: Explain why you are perfect for this position. Include something unique about yourself that would benefit the employer.

Third Paragraph: Mention that your resume is enclosed. Indicate your desire to meet with the employer and that you will follow-up. Thank the employer for their time.

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blind ad" where there is no way to know the name of the company to research. In this case, send the letter to the title of the appropriate hiring manager, (e.g. "Production Manager," "Maintenance Supervisor," "Office Manager," etc.) Never use the term, "To Whom it May Concern."

Thank-You Letters and Notes -

"Thank you" is a powerful statement that is heard too seldom. Every thank you is an opportunity to restate your qualifications and to leave a fresh impression in the mind of the reader. Send a thank-you letter or note to employers and employment contacts whenever they have extended themselves in any way on behalf of your job search. At the minimum, a written thank you should be sent after all interviews.

Date

Dear Mr. Jones:

Sample Thank-You Letter

Thank you for the interview for the accountant position today. I appreciate the information you shared with me and enjoyed meeting Ms. Smith from the Accounting Department.

My interest in working for Lord's Industries is stronger than ever, and based on your description of the position, I know I can do a good job for you.

I will contact you by Tuesday of next week to learn of your decision.

Sincerely,

Your name (add your signature above this line)
Your address

Thank-you letters and notes should be standard tools in your job search. The thank-you letter should follow a standard business letter format while the note may be a simple hand-written note or card. Which to send depends upon the situation and your personal style.

Thank-You Letter Reminders - When thanking a potential employer, restate your interest in the position and/or company, be brief, and always plan your follow-up. Tell the person when and how they can expect to hear from you in the future. If there are multiple people involved, such as with a panel interview, be sure to thank each person. Send one letter to each person or send a single letter to a key person for distribution. When sending more than one thank you, it is very effective to vary each one. Always send a written thank you to a person by name.

OUR MISSION

We provide employment and support services for our customers to improve their economic opportunities

"A proud member of America's Workforce Network"

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program • Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by calling (801) 526-9240. Individuals with speech and/or hearing impairments may call Relay Utah by dialing 711. Spanish Relay Utah: 1-888-346-3162

