

INDEX: COVER LETTERS

Overview: Cover Letters.....	Page 1
Cover Letter Tips.....	Page 2
Sample Cover Letter Format	Page 3
Cold Contact Sample Cover Letter.....	Page 4
Referral Sample Cover Letter.....	Page 5

OVERVIEW: COVER LETTERS

The cover letter is a supplement to your resume and should showcase your unique educational and professional background. It is an opportunity for you to further personalize your application by addressing career changes, as well as directly linking your skills with the skills that are required for the position to which you are applying. Of course, while you will have a working draft of your cover letter, it will be slightly different for each position and each company to which you apply.

One of the major pieces of information that an employer gathers from a cover letter is whether or not an applicant can write well. With that in mind, the cover letter must conform to accepted standards for *business letter* documents. When crafting a cover letter, it is always important to **match** your qualifications to the job and the employer. Help the employer to see the link between your background and your skills and the job posting that they wrote. Some sources for information to help you tailor your cover letter to a specific job include employment advertisements, position descriptions, online information and informational interviews.

The reader of a cover letter may be the hiring authority, an agent of the hiring authority or an interested third party. The hiring authority is the person who has the final say in who is hired for a specific position (ultimately, this is the person you want to read your resume). An agent is usually someone who is working on behalf of the hiring authority, such as human resources, an independent agency or a subordinate. Third parties include colleagues and subordinates of the hiring authority who are assisting in the hiring process. The way you craft your letter should take the reader into consideration.

****IMPORTANT:** Anytime a resume is sent by mail or email, it should be accompanied by a cover letter.

COVER LETTER TIPS

- Tailor your letter to the position for which you are applying! [This will involve some online research and perhaps making some calls and/or networking; finding a job is a JOB in itself!]
- Cover letters allow you to showcase your individuality by making you stand apart from other applicants. Do not rush through the process.
- Always send a cover letter with your resume, even if it is not requested.
- Keep it brief: no more than one page with three to five paragraphs.
- Include your contact information at the top of the page (see example cover letter)
- If possible, address your letter to a specific person. Research online and/or reach out to the company to figure out who will be reading the letter. In some large organizations you may not always be able to identify the name of a specific person. In this case, send the letter to the title of the recipient (Office Manager, Human Resources Specialist, Hiring Manager, Search Committee, etc.)
- The first twenty words of a cover letter are important; they should grab the reader's attention and be straight to the point.
- Be sure to state your interest in the job and the company. Why are you applying? Why here?
- Why you are the best choice for this position?
- Demonstrate that you are knowledgeable about the organization and its products or services.
- Describe yourself in terms of the *contributions you can make* to the employer.
- If you are applying to a large organization, be sure to include industry and position-specific keywords.
- Do NOT restate your resume, your cover letter is a supplement to and an expanding-upon your resume.
- Use simple, direct language in your own words, and be brief.
- Always have someone proof read your final draft; eliminate all spelling and grammatical errors.
- Use a professional business format. All text is to be *left aligned* on the page.
- Directly request an interview.
- Thank the person for taking the time to read your letter. This is separate from your valediction (i.e. Sincerely, Regards, etc.).
- Sign your letter if you provide a hard copy to the employer. Sign professional documents in blue or black ink only.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FORMAT

Your Name
Street Address
City, State Postal Code
Phone Number
Email

Date

Individual's Name
Job Title
Name of Organization
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. _____:

First Paragraph: State the position title you are applying for and the company name. Explain where you heard about the job (from friend, Internet, College Career Specialist, etc.). Include why you are interested in the position and the company. Answer the questions: what excites you about this company, and this position?

Second Paragraph: Restate your interest in the position and explain how you are PERFECT for this position. Do not repeat the information on your resume; rather, demonstrate your skills by stating when and where you have used them. Highlight skills that are relevant to the job (see the job description for this information). If there are details from your resume that you might want to explain, like a career shift, or a long period of unemployment, this is where you can address those details. Include something special or unique about yourself that will benefit the employer. Remember, the reader will consider this as an example of your writing ability. ****Note:** If necessary, this section can be split into two paragraphs.

Third Paragraph: Restate the job title and why you are the best candidate for the job. Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration and request an interview to discuss your qualifications.

Sincerely,

(Your Signature in blue or black ink)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure

COLD CONTACT SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Karen Kareer
5555 Lakewood Road
Somewhere, WA 55555
(555) 555-5555
karenkareer@yahoo.com

May 20, 2008

The Metropolitan Grill
210 Industry Avenue
Anytown, WA 55555

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am writing to express my interest in the Manager position with The Metropolitan Grill that is advertised in the May 11th 2011 posting on Craigslist. I believe that my education and experience with over ten years of solid work history in the hospitality industry, makes me an ideal candidate for this position.

Over the past decade, I have provided superior customer service and supervisory support to a diverse range of individuals. I have experience working with all types of organizations including international franchises and independently owned businesses. In these positions, I have established my reputation as a dedicated, efficient, and highly organized individual capable of handling multiple tasks in busy environments, while consistently exceeding company expectations.

I feel that this position will allow me to use my current skills and offer me the potential for long-term growth. With a commitment to excellence and a passion for helping others, I feel I am the ideal candidate for the position of Manager with The Metropolitan Grill. Enclosed is a copy of my resume, which more fully details my qualifications for this position. I look forward to speaking with you soon and will follow-up to confirm that you have received my email and enclosed resume. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Kareer

Enclosure: Resume

REFERAL SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Anita Job
5555 Lakewood Road
Somewhere, WA 55555
(555) 555-5555
anitajob@yahoo.com

July 31, 2007

Jane Black
General Manager
The Westin - Seattle
42 Industry Circle
Somewhere Else, WA 55555

Dear Ms. Black:

Mary Smith, Vice President of Marketing for The Westin - Seattle, suggested that I contact you directly regarding my interest in an Accounting Specialist position with your organization. Although my resume is actively on file in Human Resources, Ms. Smith felt that you would want to be made aware of my unique qualifications and availability.

My background makes me a highly qualified Accounting Specialist with more than four years of accounting experience with a large organization. My qualifications include extensive PC experience with knowledge of QuickBooks and other specialized accounting software. In my previous job as an Accounting Assistant, I had the opportunity to demonstrate accurate bookkeeping, develop customized procedures for accounts payable and accounts receivable and professional reports.

As a result of my past experiences, I feel that I am an ideal candidate for the position of Accounting Specialist with The Westin - Seattle. I would like to meet with you to discuss my qualifications in greater detail. If I do not hear back from you in the next week, I will follow-up with you on my application status. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Anita Job

Enclosure: Resume, Employment Application

Cc: M Smith