

HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER

Step 1: Before You Write Your Cover Letter

1. Always write a cover letter when you submit a resume, even if the job posting did not explicitly request one.
2. A good cover letter can encourage your prospective employer to consider your resume.
3. Research the company you're sending your cover letter to before writing your letter. Knowing about current needs and future plans will help you write a letter that shows what an asset you will be.

Step 2: Choose a Cover Letter Style

Cover Letters in Response to a Job Posting

1. Send your letter to a specific person.
2. Reference the job posting, either on a separate line in your cover letter or in the letter body.
3. Include a mention of where you saw the job listing.
4. You understandably want to reply quickly to a job posting, but taking a few minutes to research the company will make your letter stand out.
 - o Try keeping a bulleted list of your accomplishments ready, so you can quickly fill in the ones that relate to the listed position.

Cover Letters Via Email

1. Many cover letters are sent via email, which means they influence whether your prospective employer will take the time to open your attached resume.
2. Email letters are usually shorter than traditional letters, so take advantage of the subject line to make your email stand out. Do not include a generic "Resume Submission" subject line, unless specifically requested to do so.
3. Formatting like fancy fonts or italics may not translate to the recipient's email, so do not bother with them.
4. Make sure to include your full name and contact information in the email.
5. Spelling and grammar still count, even in email!

Cold Call Cover Letters

1. A cold call letter is sent to the general hiring manager for a company, not in response to a job posting.
2. A cold call letter should still explain what type of position you desire.
3. Even if you are not applying to a particular job posting, you still want to show you've researched the company and explain how your skills meet the company's needs. Show how you would be an asset to them.
4. Write that you will follow up to talk about possible openings, then do so!

Step 3: Begin Your Cover Letter

1. Make sure your name, address, phone number, and email address are in the header of your letter.
 - o Rules for email are more relaxed, but you still want this information to be in your message.
2. Never send a letter to a generic HR department or addressed as Dear Sir/Madam. Instead, find out who is in charge of hiring for your position and address the letter to that person.
3. Make sure you spell the name correctly, and use the proper title.
 - o Call the company to get this information, if necessary, unless the ad specifies no calls.
4. Use a professional salutation:
 - o Dear Sara: - Too informal
 - o Dear Ms. Harris: - Good opening
 - o Use the addressee's full name if you cannot determine which title to use.

Step 4: Write Your Cover Letter

1. If applying for a specific job, make sure to reference the position in your letter.
 - o Mention where you heard about the position.
 - o If there's a job ID number, list that.
 - o You do not want to be thrown in the wrong pile by a harried recruiter.
2. Show that you've researched the position and the company.
3. Talk about how the skills you have match the position's requirements in a way that draws in the reader and highlights your interest.
4. Try to include new information when describing how you meet the job requirements instead of repeating what is in your resume.
 - o This can mean a more in-depth exploration of something on your resume or a related topic that did not fit on your resume.
5. Do not overuse "I" or "me" and talk about your needs and desires; explain how you will be an asset to the company and help them.
6. Be positive in your letter. No one wants to hire an unpleasant co-worker.
7. Personalize your letter with humor or another aspect of your personality.
 - o Personalization does not mean sharing intimate details or using cute gimmicks in your letter. This is still a professional presentation.
8. If you know someone at the company you're approaching, ask him about the job opening.
 - o You can mention this discussion in your letter as it reinforces your interest in the job.
 - o The conversation may give you insight on how to make your letter stand out from the applicant pool.
9. If you know someone at the company, check if this person can give you a recommendation.
 - o If you can reference an employee and his recommendation in your letter, this may help you get to the next step- an interview!
10. Remember, a cover letter should be brief; being verbose and writing more than three paragraphs will not help your chances.

Step 5: Proofread Before You Send Your Cover Letter

1. Make sure your cover letter is free of spelling and grammatical errors. A cover letter is a chance to show you can write clearly and competently.
2. Ask friends and family to proofread the letter for you.
3. If there is no one you can ask, hire someone to check the letter for mistakes. It is important to be error-free.
4. Getting feedback on your letter, whether it is from people in your circle or an outside source, is another way to discover what impression your cover letter makes on people.
5. Did your enthusiasm and interest shine through? If not, rewrite the letter.
6. Your cover letter is as important as your resume, so take time to make it perfect.

What Not to Do in Your Cover Letter

1. Do not say why you need a job. Explain how hiring you helps the company, not how it could help you.
2. In an initial cover letter, there is no need to include your salary requirements.
3. Your cover letter should not be longer than one page.
4. Do not use the same form cover letter with every resume you submit.

COVER LETTER SAMPLE 1

Joe D. Plumber
3456 Main Street • Any City, FL 33320
Home: (954) 555-5555 • joedplumber@hotmail.com

May 5, 20--

Philip Screwdriver
Chief Personnel Director
ABC Enterprises
1 Industry Plaza
Miami, FL 33054

Dear Mr. Screwdriver:

Your job posting for an *Office Manager/Corporate Administrator* caught my attention because my background appears to parallel your needs. Please refer to the enclosed resume for a summary of my qualifications. I am sure you have been flooded with hundreds of qualified applicants; please allow me to explain why you would want to call me first.

I am very self sufficient and able to work independently with little supervision. With little formal training, I have taken the initiative to learn about and remain current with my company's services, processes, and expectations. I am looked at as an information resource and enjoy sharing my knowledge with others. I also enjoy managing projects and meeting key deadlines.

I am always looking for ways to streamline processes and become more efficient. I have developed several policies and processes using available software to automate reporting, notify customers of changes, and inform the coworkers/staff of new initiatives. When supervising clerical staff. I always try to plan ahead to make the best use of their time.

t work well with executives, customers, vendors, and coworkers, and demonstrate strong interpersonal communication and good judgment. I always try to listen closely and understand what others need. Then, I look for ways to help solve the problem.

I am confident that I can deliver similar results for ABC Company. I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you to schedule an appointment and provide you with more information. Thank you for your time and consideration; I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Joe D. Plumber

COVER LETTER SAMPLE 2

GEORGE W. BUSH

MARKET RESEARCH ANALYST

December 3, 2008

Dear Sir/Madam:

As a professional, I understand that success depends on a strong commitment to customer satisfaction. Using logic and common sense to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions or approaches to problems is key to increasing corporate performance. I believe that my background and education reflect a commitment and ability to find solutions to these challenges. I have developed excellent skills in project coordination that increased the effectiveness of my organization.

I am considered an enthusiastic, hard working, assertive, and practical leader who is extremely people oriented. My position encompasses multiple tasks and responsibilities that include:

- ◆ Creating and analyzing financial data to predict future trends and identify potential problems.
- ◆ Designing and implementing new formats, procedures, policies for transferring information while working as part of a team.

Thank you for your consideration, I approach my work with a strong sense of urgency, working well under pressure and change. I look forward to meeting with you personally so that we may discuss how I may make a positive contribution to your organization.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Enclosures (1)

COVER LETTER SAMPLE 3

Barack Obama

1234 Anywhere Lane, Miramar, FL 33025
Cell (954) 555-5555 barackobama@yahoo.com

March 25, 20--

Attn: Human Resources Director

With the enclosed resume, I am writing to express my interest in employment, which could utilize my extensive experience related to administration, customer service, accounting and management skills.

As you will see in my resume, I am currently working as an administrator for _____. I communicate daily with students, staff and faculty members. I am a motivated professional with strong people, accounting and management skills.

I hope you will contact me to suggest a time when we could meet in person to discuss your needs and goals and how I could meet them. I can provide outstanding professional references.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama

Enclosure

COVER LETTER SAMPLE 4

John McCain

6777 Elgin Street • Miami, FL 33156 • (786) 555-2222 jm@email.com

April 15, 2008

Mr. Gerard Berger
Manager of Human Resources
Allen Investments Inc.
1023 Andrews Avenue
Ft Lauderdale, FL 33301

Dear Mr. Berger:

I am applying for the position of _____, which was advertised April. 4th on your company's website. The position seems to fit very well with my education, experience, and career interests.

According to the advertisement, your position requires excellent communication skills, computer literacy, and a Bachelors degree. I earned my Bachelors degree from Trinity International University. My studies have included courses in business management, speech communications, economics, and business writing. I understand the position also requires a candidate who is team and detail-oriented, works well under pressure, and is able to deal with people in departments throughout the company. These are skills I developed both in my course work and in my current position.

My background and goals seem to match your requirements well. I am confident that I can perform the job effectively, and I am excited about the idea of working for a dynamic, nationally recognized company.

If you would like to schedule an interview or otherwise discuss my interest in this position, please call me at (954) 555-0000. I will be available at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John McCain