10 Tips for Writing a Cover Letter

1) A cover letter should be written with confidence and professional enthusiasm. Focus on strengths, not the areas you need to grow in.

2) Use the same “Name Heading” from your resume at the top of your cover letter and omit the address block for a polished look (think letterhead). Also use the same font in your resume and cover letter.

3) Write a targeted letter for each position you are applying for and include the company name.

4) Information should be presented in concise sentences with common words. Stick to 2 – 3 body paragraphs and always keep it to 1 page.

5) Write your cover letter after you have written your resume. Naturally, this will help you expand on bullet points on your resume and explain how these skills and experiences will relate to the job you are applying for.

6) Focus on what you have to offer them; not what you are looking to get out of the company. (Very Important!)

7) Do not re-write everything on your resume. Your cover letter is a brief introduction of yourself and why you are the right fit for the job, rather than a long list of experience and qualifications.

8) Avoid common clichés and vague descriptions such as: “I think outside the box” or “I’m a people-person.”

9) Use your cover letter to explain gaps in employment, career changes, willingness to relocate, or other special circumstances that may leave a hiring manager with questions after reviewing your resume.

10) Always sign your cover letter, even if you’re sending it electronically.

Examples of Powerful Cover Letter Phrases

- After reviewing the position description for the (position title), I feel that I have much to offer (name of organization).

- As you refer to my resume, you will see that I have much experience in (__________) which is directly related to the skills in (name skills) which are necessary for this position.

- I understand the needs of your company such as (__________) and I am confident that I can deliver them.
Targeted Cover Letter Template

**Name Heading** *(same as resume heading with Name, Address, Phone etc. –or- traditional address block)*

**Month, Date, Year**

<2 Spaces>

**Name of Organization**
**Street or P. O. Box Address**
**City, State Zip Code**

<4 Spaces>

**Dear Hiring Manager**: *(specify name, if possible, or “Dear Human Resources”, or “Dear Hiring Manager” etc.)*

<2 Spaces>

**Opening Paragraph**: State why you are writing, the exact name of the position you are applying for, how you heard about the position, and very basic info about yourself. If you are a current student or recent graduate this is a good spot to mention this, especially to justify lack of relevant job experience.

<2 Spaces>

**Body Paragraph 1**: Explain why you are interested in the employer and how your skills match the employer’s best interest. Demonstrate that you know enough about the employer or position to relate your background to the position. Expand on past experience or narrate example(s) of accomplishments made in previous work/internship/volunteer situations that would relate to the new position you are applying for.

<2 Spaces>

**Body Paragraph 2 (optional)**: Set yourself apart from the rest; tell the employer why they should hire you. This is also an excellent opportunity to show that you have researched the company and understand their needs. You could also use this section to briefly narrate a major accomplishment that brought favorable results to a past company/student club.

<2 Spaces>

**Closing Paragraph**: You may briefly indicate personality traits may make you a good fit for the company and show that you are a team player. Indicate that you would like the opportunity for a personal interview with (company name) to learn more about the position and to discuss in further detail what you have to offer. Thank the employer for her/his time and consideration.

<2 Spaces>

**Sincerely** or **Respectfully,**

<4 Spaces for handwritten signature>

**Your Handwritten Signature** *(Blue ink preferred, never any color other than black or blue ink)*

**Your Name** *(Typed)*

**Enclosures** *(In parenthesis) [Number of Documents attached, such as resume, application, reference sheet etc.]*