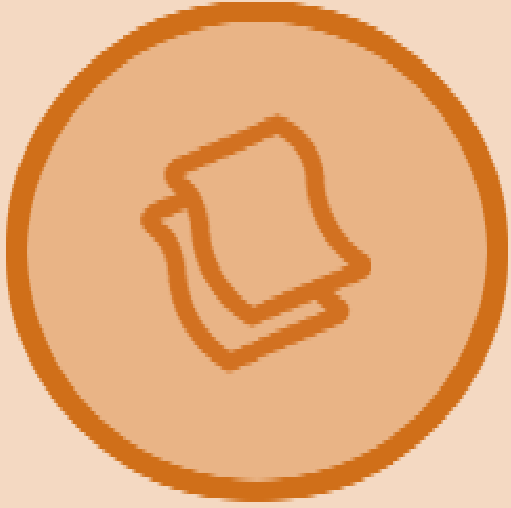


Prepare

Resumes and Letters



Insider Advice for Cover Letters

A cover letter should address the needs of the employer, display enthusiasm and excitement, and describe how the skills, abilities, and experience outlined in your resume are a perfect match for the requirements of the position. Use your cover letter to show how your experience, knowledge of the company, and positive attitude will enable you to excel in this job.

Your cover letter is also an example of your work. It should be concisely written, have a professional appearance, and be free of grammatical and spelling errors. Use your cover letter to create a positive impression that, along with your resume, will convince your prospective employer to invite you in for an interview. When sending a resume to a prospective employer, you should always include a cover letter.

What Should a Cover Letter Include?

A cover letter should accomplish these three basic objectives:

1. Introduce yourself and express your interest in the job.
2. Describe your qualifications and how they will benefit the company.
3. Request an interview and suggest follow-up.

Introduce Yourself and Express Interest

In your initial paragraph, you want to convey how you heard about the position. If someone recommended you apply for the position, be sure to mention that person's name in the beginning of your letter. A personal referral creates a connection between you and the hiring manager and represents a vote of confidence from someone the employer may trust. You also want to use this introductory paragraph to identify the position you are applying for and the reasons you are interested in the job.

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Describe Your Qualifications

In the body of your cover letter, you want to translate how your skills and experience meet the requirements of the position. One powerful method for accomplishing this is to list each of the requirements as outlined in the job description and then, next to the requirement, describe the skills, abilities, and experience you possess that demonstrate your ability to meet

these requirements. If you have researched the company and understand their current and future needs, then describe how your skills, abilities, and experience will help the company achieve their short and long-term goals.

Describe what you can bring to the company, not what you are expecting from them.

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Request an Interview

In the concluding paragraph of your letter, you want to summarize your qualifications and why you are a strong candidate for the position, restate your interest and excitement in the job, and request an interview. Also state when and how you will follow up. Usually, this will be a phone call to confirm that the hiring manager has received your resume.

Successful Cover Letter Professional Advice

Address your letter to the hiring manager responsible for filling the position. If you do not know who is responsible, research the company and find out.

Keep your letter to one page. Tailor each cover letter to the position you are applying for. Describe what you can bring to the company, not what you are expecting from them. Use your research to demonstrate you know something about their company, their needs, and how you can address them.

Write in a professional, energetic, and personal tone. Mention that you have included a resume with your letter. Check and recheck for spelling and grammatical errors.

Broadcast Letters

Use this letter to apply for a variety of positions with one or several companies. Describe in detail your skills, abilities, and experience and demonstrate how they add value to the company. Because this letter provides additional details about your experience normally included in a resume, you may not need to include your resume with this letter. Broadcast letters usually target a specific type of position, or positions that use your specific set of skills and abilities. You would direct this letter to the company's head of human

resources or to the head of the department in which you wish to work.

Advertisement Reply Letters

Use this letter to respond to specific advertisements placed in newspapers, periodicals, journals, and the Internet. Describe where you learned about the position, and highlight the key skills, abilities, and accomplishments in your resume and how this experience qualifies you for the position. You would direct this letter to the person in charge of hiring for the listed position.

Referral Letters

Use this letter when someone has personally referred you for a position or company. In a referral letter, be sure to include the name of the person who has referred you in the first paragraph of the letter. Highlight the key skills, abilities, and accomplishments in your resume and describe how this experience qualifies you for the position.

*“Write
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Relocation Letters

Use this letter when you are planning to relocate to another area. Announce that you are moving to the area on a specific date and describe the type of position you are seeking. Highlight the key skills, abilities, and accomplishments listed in your resume and describe how this experience qualifies you for the position you are seeking. Also include a suggestion for an initial phone interview, and include information on when you will be in the area and available for a face-to-face interview.

Fax Cover Sheet Letters

Always use a cover sheet when faxing your resume to a prospective employer. In the content area of the fax cover sheet, highlight your key skills, abilities, and accomplishments, describe how this experience qualifies you for the position, and ask for the interview. You would direct this letter to the hiring manager in charge of hiring for the position you are applying for.

E-mail Cover Letters

When sending a resume by e-mail, you may use the body of the e-mail message to highlight the key skills, abilities, and accomplishments in your resume, describe how this experience qualifies you for the position, and ask for the interview.

Other Possible Letters in Your Job Search

Letters for Staffing Firms, Headhunters, or Recruiters

These letters should include information about the type of organization you want to work for and the type of work you are interested in. Highlight the key skills, abilities, and accomplishments listed in your resume and describe how this experience qualifies you for the type of position you are seeking. This letter could be targeted to a specific type of position, or to any position that uses your specific set of skills and abilities. You would direct this letter to the head of the staffing firm or the individual recruiter with whom you will be working.

Networking Letters

Use this letter to contact people in your network that can provide leads for possible job openings. A networking letter can be sent to people you know, or people to whom you have been referred. Describe the type of job you are looking for and what assistance you hope the person can provide. Highlight the key skills, abilities, and accomplishments listed in your resume and describe how this experience qualifies you for the type of position you are seeking. End the letter by thanking them for their time and effort.

Letters After the Interview

Thank You Letters

Use this letter to express appreciation for interviews, job leads, or any other help you have received during your job search. When addressing these letters to prospective employers, be sure to include information on when you will contact them next and what additional information you can provide. When writing to someone you have received help from, be sure to update them on the progress of your job search and describe how you

followed through on suggestions or recommendations they made.

Follow-up Letters

Use this letter after the interview to follow up and show your continued interest in a position. Be sure to thank employers for their time and restate your interest in the job. Indicate when you will contact them next and ask if there is any additional information you can provide.

Offer Acceptance Letters

You are accepting a job offer. Congratulations! This letter expresses your gratitude for the offer and acceptance of the position. Use this letter to confirm your understanding of the requirements of the position and the overall compensation package and acknowledge the date you will start.

Offer Rejection Letters

Use this letter to express your appreciation for the job offer and tactfully decline at this time. Describe how you enjoyed your interview and how you were impressed with the quality of the company and people you met. Politely explain your specific reasons for not accepting the offer and thank them for the time they spent on your interview. Do not use an Offer Rejection Letter to negotiate a better offer. This should be done in person or over the telephone.

Letters for Your Current Employer

Seeking a Promotion

This letter should outline your skills, abilities, experience, and achievements and demonstrate how they have benefited the company and why they qualify you for a promotion. Describe the responsibilities of the new position and specify how your experience will enable you to fulfill these responsibilities.

Resignation Letters

Use this letter to resign from your current position. Describe what you enjoyed about working with the management and staff of the company and wish them luck and success in the future. Always leave a company on a positive note so that you can use the management and staff as networking contacts in the future.

“A networking letter can be sent to people you know, or people to whom you have been referred.”
