COVER LETTERS & ATTENTION GRABBING RESUMES

Tips and tricks to make your cover letter and resume stand out from the rest



Career Management Center

COVER LETTER GOALS

- Introduce and present your resume to HR or Hiring personnel
- A precise, simple and well formatted cover letter should increase chance of an interview
- Helps you appear as a more impressive and serious candidate
- Overall can increase chances of landing job

OVERVIEW

- Engage the reader's attention within the first few lines
- Conduct research to personalize the cover letter to the individual responsible for the recruitment process
- Display your enthusiasm and interest in the job
- Include relevant details but avoid a repeat of your resume
- Close the letter respectfully and state an action of follow-up

THINGS TO AVOID



- Impersonal: "Dear Hiring Manager" "To whom it may concern"
- Telling what the company can do for you instead of what you can do for the company
- Vague information that is not tailored to the position of interest
- Showing your ignorance of the position at hand

COVER LETTER LAYOUT

Date

Name Title Company Address City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name,

<u>Your opening paragraph</u> should briefly introduce you and your interest in the company. Refer to the specific position you are interested in now. Cite any details that has prompted you to apply for this position.

Middle paragraph (or two) should consist of specific examples from your background that would be of greatest interest to the company and consequently create the "notion of fit." DO not make broad generalizations about your skill set. Focus on your skills and accomplishments and how they will contribute to the company. Also demonstrate that you are knowledgeable about the organization and the industry.

Your closing paragraph represents your summation and should outline the next steps. For example, indicate that you would like the opportunity to interview. Thank the addressee for his/her time. Include your contact info (phone and email) in case the cover letter gets separated from your resume.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Typed Name

COVER LETTER LAYOUT

- Date listed first on the top (Left or Right side of page)
- Hiring Manager Name (Research)

Job Title
Company Name
Address

Mr. James Smith
Director of Human Resources
Amazing Company
1234 Lake St.
Los Angeles, CA 91234

COVER LETTER DETAIL

- Start with Mr. or Ms. Last name (Research)
- Usually 3-4 Paragraphs total
 - Styles can vary
- Paragraph 1
 - Include the position you're applying for
 - Name a mutual contact if applicable
 - State how you learned of position

HELLO
I am applying
for the
Graphic Design
Position

COVER LETTER BODY

- Paragraphs 2-3
 - Summary of your skills and accomplishments relevant to the position
 - Select 2-3 key qualifications/duties from the job description and use specific examples that demonstrate your ability to do them
 - If possible, use examples from current/most recent position
 - Some cover letter styles may include bullet points
 - List examples in order of most impressive and relevant



COVER LETTER BODY

- Paragraph 4 (Concluding paragraph)
 - Respectful closing; thank for their time
 - Express interest for an interview
 - Don't be afraid to indicate when/how you will follow up



OPTIONAL TACTICS

- Unique catchphrases or mottos
 - "If truly loving data is wrong, I don't want to be right. It seems like the rest of the team at Company A feels the same—and that's just one of the reasons why I think I'd be the perfect next hire for your sales team."
- Testimonial lines
 - Can come from recommendation letters, performance evaluations, staff memos, etc.
- A slogan: "Meeting challenges, overcoming obstacles and closing sales"

SUCCESSFUL COVER LETTER BODY'S

My name is John Doe, I am a senior at Pepperdine University studying Marketing with a focus in Economics. I am interested in <u>your Marketing Assistant</u> opening which I learned of through <u>my professor and your employee</u>, Mr. James Smith.

Currently I work part-time for the Department of Higher Education. As a student, I was able to travel Europe and complete two internships within the industry. Along the way, I've learned effective time-management, teamwork, and perspectives that will continue to help companies such as yours throughout my professional career.

Here are a few of the projects I have worked on:

- Developed a marketing concept that saved Company A more than \$20,000
- Wrote proposal for \$25,000 grant from state of California
- Established marketing program that increased participation 143%
- Collaborated with a designer to develop media for a kiosk within Staples Center
- Managed user account inquiries with Company B, a multi-million dollar account
- Worked with creative writer and CFO to develop content for a Podcast

Attached is a current copy of my resume and professional references. Letters of recommendation are available upon request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to <u>contact me</u> at XXX.XXXXXX or xxxxxxx@gmail.com.

COVER LETTERS THAT WORKED!

GOOD NEWS!

There is a copywriter only a phone call away who knows the difference between a CD, the FDIC and the SIPC ... one who can express complex details clearly and convincingly to consumers, investors, shareholders.

l am an experienced advertising and direct mail copywriter with a strong financial background — and the time to put this expertise to work for Company A! You'll add an exceptional member to your marketing team since I've created sales tools, direct mail packages, advertisements, product brochures, and corporate identity pieces quickly and effectively — often overnight.

Plus, unlike most writers, my background includes staff positions with both advertising agencies and commercial banks. What this means for you is that you'll save hours negotiating with legal counsel, thanks to my in-depth knowledge of government restrictions on financial advertising. Finally, because I possess such in-depth experience, I am well versed in many financial products and services so I can begin being effective for you immediately without wasting your resources and time on training.

Can I tell you more? If so, you may reach me at (555) 555-5555. In the meantime, I will send samples of my work to your office by email within the week. I thank you in advance for your consideration.

INITIAL RESUME TIPS

- First your resume needs to make it to human eyes
 - About 75% resumes are never seen as a result
 - More than 75% of large companies use an ATS
 - Close to 60% of mid-sized companies use an ATS
 - If unfamiliar with ATS, review CMC Webinar, Tips on how to get past an Employer's ATS: http://bschool.pepperdine.edu/career-services/webinars/



RESUME OVERVIEW

- Keep it simple (7-10 second window)
 - Avoid flooding with sections/info that's best suited for cover letter or explained in an interview.
 - Summary/Objective
 - Experience
 - Education/Certifications
 - Additional Relevant Skills
 - The most successful applicants tailor resume for each position (Keywords, relevant duties, etc.)
 - Increase focus on most recent experiences
 - Older or irrelevant experiences can be grouped together

Summary/Objective: Keyword heavy; WIIFT

Sample Career Objective:

 Seeking a Sales Manager position that will benefit from my <u>sales</u> <u>experience</u>, <u>positive interaction skills</u> and industry contacts which can <u>improve the sales results</u>.

Sample Career Summary:

• Management professional with two strong years in <u>supply chain</u> <u>improvement</u>, and more than five years in <u>purchasing</u>, <u>inventory</u> <u>management</u>, <u>supply chain analysis</u>, and <u>sales</u>. Skilled in <u>six sigma</u> with additional experience in <u>managing teams</u> and <u>driving successful</u> results.

- Experience: More achievements & Less duties
 - Increased revenue by 3% through enhanced business processes
 - Reduced turnover 15% by developing referral program
 - Managed and allocated \$1 million budget
 - Increased productivity 50% by creating new processes
 - Trained staff of 12 associates on new company software
 - Achieved \$100,000 in sales; 12% increase from prior year
- E2B projects are acceptable to include in experience



- Buzzwords and Action Words
 - Avoid using "I" in the resume
 - Start sentences with impressive action words
 - Managed, Led, Analyzed, Developed, Increased, etc.
 - Key buzzwords can vary by industry
 - Present tense for current jobs and past tense for previous jobs or specific accomplishments

Education:

- Highest/most recent level of education first
- Some may list MBA next to name
- Do not list high school
- If a degree wasn't completed, list number of credits completed
- Consider avoiding dates if you already graduated
- Recent Grads/Current Students:
 - Listing GPA is ok if over 3.5
 - Can include awards, scholarships, accomplishments, relevant courses

- Education Continued:
 - Consider only listing certifications that are relevant to the job
 - Clubs/memberships/teams are most impressive if it shows leadership experience or relevant projects
 - Fraternities & Sororities are acceptable
 - Include study abroad coursework if relevant
 - Limit Education to 1/3 of page maximum



- Additional Skills
 - Opportunity to list additional skills required of job
 - Hard Skills and Soft Skills listed in job description that you didn't fit into your summary or experience



QUESTIONS

