

WRITING YOUR COVER LETTER

An effective Cover Letter:

- Is an introduction to your resume
- Is brief, yet informative
- Has three recognizable parts:
- Opening, which explains why you are writing,
- Main Body, which lists two or three of your major accomplishments and gives the reader good reason to want to interview you,
- Closing, which expresses a desire for future communication.

Some tips!

- The letter must be addressed to a specific individual. Call the company for exact spelling and title.
- Include clues that hiring you will lead to higher production, greater efficiency, and better performance by focusing on the self-interest of the person to whom you are writing.
- Try to include a challenging thought that will cause the employer to feel that meeting with you would be worthwhile even if there are no present openings.
- It should explain how you are going to follow up. Be direct in requesting an interview.
- Sign and date your cover letter.
- Keep a copy of all your cover letters so you'll know what you have told them and how to follow-up.
- Type your cover letter on the same paper as your resume.

Checklist:

- ✓ Avoided repeating my resume. Tried to “*dig deeper*” by focusing on my *job-related skills* and the *positive contribution* I will make to employers.
- ✓ Demonstrated *outstanding written communication skills* because I realize that this is the number one skill desired by employers of college graduates.
- ✓ Used “*action words*” and “*bullet entries*” to make my cover letter interesting to employers and highlight important points
- ✓ *Single spaced* within paragraphs and *double-spaced* between paragraphs.
- ✓ “Double-checked” for *spelling, grammar, and typographical errors*.
- ✓ Limited my cover letter to *one page typed*.
- ✓ Used *high quality resume paper* in a *professional color*, like gray or ivory, which matches my resume.
- ✓ Purchased *matching envelopes* to send my cover letter and resume to potential employers.
- ✓ Asked a *career counselor* to review my cover letter to make suggestions and check for errors that I cannot see.
- ✓ Plan to *mail or FAX* my cover letter and resume together. My cover letter will serve as an introduction to my resume and direct my resume to the right person.

Cover Letter Format Tips:

Address (home or campus)

City, State Zip

Telephone Number

[1 space]

Date of letter:

[3 spaces]

Mr./Ms./Dr. Contact's Full Name

Contact's Title

Contact's Department

Employing Organization

Street Address

City, State Zip

[1 space]

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Contact's Last Name:

[1 space]

Opening Paragraph – State the reason for the letter, name the specific position or type of work for which you are applying, and indicate from which resource (placement center, news medium, friend, employment service) you learned of the opening.

Second Paragraph – Indicate why you are interested in the position, the company, its products or services – above all what you can do for the employer. If you are a recent graduate explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position. If you have some practical work experience, point out your specific achievements or unique qualifications. Try not to repeat the same information the reader will find in the resume.

Third Paragraph – Refer the reader to the enclosed resume or application form, which summarizes your qualifications, training, and experiences, or whatever medium you may be using to present yourself.

Final Paragraph – Indicate your desire for a personal interview and your flexibility as to the time and place. Repeat your phone number in the letter and offer any assistance to help in a speedy response. Finally, close your letter with a statement, or question which will encourage a response.

[1 space]

Sincerely,

[3 spaces – Sign Full Name]

Type Full Name

[1 space]

Enclosure (to note that resume or application is enclosed)

Sample Cover Letter:

985 East Beltline Northeast
Campus Box _____
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49525

April 12, 1999

Mr. John Warren, Executive Director
1st Source Bank
2345 Main Street
Elmherst, MI 45677

Dear Mr. Warren:

I am writing in response to your posting in Cornerstone University's Career Services Office regarding the available position in your finance department. The position as Cost Accountant seems to fit very well with my education, experience, and career interests.

In May of 1999, I will graduate from Cornerstone University with a Bachelor of Arts in Accounting. Currently, I am a head bank teller for 1st Source Bank. I have successfully progressed to positions of increasing responsibility and have actively looked for ways to stretch and increase my skill level both on and off my jobs.

My resume is enclosed for your consideration. As my resume depicts, my education and experience match the qualifications you seek in your trainees. Though this is important, I believe that I have the interpersonal skills and motivation needed to build a successful career in banking and finance. My relatively extensive experience gives me confidence in my career direction and in my abilities to perform competently.

I am looking forward to meeting with you to further discuss my qualifications for the position in your finance department. You may contact me at (616)831-7006, extension _____. Please leave a message if I am not in, and I will return your call within one business day.

Thank you very much for considering my request. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Name

Enclosure