

Cover Letter Formats

Employer Invited Letter: Use the employer invited letter whenever an employer has asked for a resume. This is often in response to a classified ad or publicized job listing. This style focuses on matching your qualifications to the advertised requirements of the position.

Uninvited or Cold Contact Letter: Use the uninvited letter to contact employers who have not advertised or published job openings. The focus is on matching your qualifications to the perceived needs of the employer based on labor market research. This strategy requires that a phone or personal contact with the employer either precede or follow the sending of the resume and cover letter.

Referral Letter: Use the referral letter to contact employers to whom you have been referred. The effective job seeker will receive referrals to many job opportunities through networking and informational interviews. The referral may be to a specific job opening (advertised or unadvertised) or to an employer who may not be hiring. In a referral letter the individual who provided the referral is mentioned in the letter.

Cover Letter Guidelines

Insert Date Here

Ms. Catherine Jones
Human Resource Manager
4M, Inc.
987 Carlson Drive
Minneapolis, IA 55621

Dear Ms. Jones:

Introduction: One Paragraph

1. Explain why you are writing (position applying for)
2. Where you learned of the position
3. Who referred you to the job, if someone did
4. Explain your interest in the employer, company, product/services

Body: Two to Four Paragraphs

1. Explain why you are qualified for the position
2. Link your cover letter to your resume, expand upon resume in letter
3. Talk about your most relevant and distinguishing characteristics

Closure: One Paragraph

1. Indicate that your resume is enclosed
2. Mention your desire for interview
3. Express your appreciation for their time and consideration of your application

Letters of Application

Ah yes, cover letters, the key to making a GREAT first impression. The problem is that the one thing that makes most people feel uncomfortable and awkward about the job search process is the cover letter. Don't be afraid though, the cover letter is your opportunity to personalize your resume and target your skills to that specific employer. Remember it's worth doing right because you are developing your reputation!

What exactly is a cover letter?

- Cover letters connect your past experiences listed on your resume to your potential future position at a new job.
- They highlight your strengths, accomplishments, and sparkling personality.
- Cover letters are flexible and can be tailored to the needs of the company to which you are applying for.

What should be included in a cover letter?

- A cover letter needs to be written concisely and formatted well to be most effective. This type of writing utilizes action words and descriptive statements as a way of conveying qualifications and career objectives.
- Assist the reader in identifying why you should be called in for an interview.
- One way to make sure your resume is passed on to the boss is the use of words from the job ad or description.
- Cover letters can be an opportunity to explain away any problems or questions. You can explain gaps in employment, etc. Things that may not be clear in your resume.
- Keep in mind that generalities can be damaging.

Do I have to write/send a cover letter with my resume?

- Yes! Anytime a resume is sent by mail, it must be accompanied by a cover letter.
- Whenever possible address the cover letter to a specific person by name and title.
- Remember, preparing the cover letter for a particular company can also get your resume past the first barrier.

Cosmetics of a Cover Letter

- The same cover letter cannot be used in every situation. It must be customized for each opportunity.
- Keep it short and sweet! Four to five paragraphs, no more than a page.
- Paper style should complement your resume. Consider using the same paper stock as you used for your resume.
- Consider signing the letter in blue ink. It implies that the letter is original. The only other color that should be used is black.

Visit the Career Services Center to view and get copies of sample cover letters or to have yours reviewed!