

How Your Cover Letter May Be Ruining Your Job Search

Summary: *You can write a cover letter that is just like every other one, or you can use these tips to write one that will actually help you get the job you want.*



Have you ever tried Googling “cover letter?” You probably found countless formats of cover letters that look pretty much the same. A starting statement that is clear, explaining to the hiring manager what position you are applying for and even where you saw the advertisement for the position. The letter continues to describe your skills that fit the job description.

This format is great if you want it to blend in with everyone else’s. If you want to stand out in a good way, follow these guidelines for each section of a cover letter:

Header and Salutation: **Research the business** to find out their purpose, successes, and challenges. Find the name of the hiring manager if possible, which may require a phone call to the business. Never settle with “to whom it may concern.” Many hiring managers will toss your cover letter out if you start off this way, because it is downright lazy. If you find more than one name for the hiring manager, a wrong name is better than a generic line.

- **See [All about Addressing Cover Letters](#) for more information.**

First paragraph: You want the reader to keep reading, so make this paragraph outshine the others. Use what you learned during your research into the company to fit the tone of their online presence. If they are a lighthearted company, a witty first paragraph is appropriate. For a formal approach, use an upbeat overview to your skills on how the company can benefit from them. Leading with your accomplishments, passions, or reasons why you love the company make for an attention-grabbing paragraph.

Body: If you did not address what position you are applying for in the first paragraph, do so now. If you already did, start off with how you can help the company be successful. Use their mission, challenges, and success to do this. Stay away from “I” statements and focus on the company. Give



concrete examples of your success, using numbers whenever possible.

Closing: The closing of your cover letter is just as important as the beginning. You are trying to sell yourself as the best candidate for the position, so be bold in your conclusion. You are also encouraging them to learn more about you by looking at your resume. Directly ask for an interview and thank them for taking the time to read your cover letter.

- See **Get a Thumbs Up on Your Resume** for more information.

Remember that hiring managers are busy, so keep your cover letter short and interesting.

Photo: forwardit.sa.gov.au