

## ***USING YOUR COVER LETTER***

It's not uncommon for employers to receive hundreds of resumés for one position, so including a well-written cover letter can set you apart from the competition. An effective cover letter must convey your value, align your experience and abilities to the company needs, and influence the reader. It's also the perfect place to infuse your personal branding message and showcase your personality and traits beyond technical skills.

It's very important that you think of this document as a template, which can be altered for each job you apply to in order to meet these three goals:

- 1** **ALIGN TO THE ROLE:** The best way to modify your cover letter is to customize the bullet points that describe how your skills or work experience align to the needs outlined in the job. This advanced level of understanding should be gained through your experience and the research you've conducted.
- 2** **CONVEY THE COMPANY'S VALUES:** To win a hiring manager's interest, it is necessary to relate what you offer and the challenges you solve directly to the company's particular culture, needs, and business challenges. You are a problem-solver. Now answer the question, "What are their problems?"
- 3** **PERSONALIZE TO THE READER:** Capture the reader's attention by addressing your message specifically to the actual person who will read your cover letter and resumé. To ensure you are reaching a person with influence, research the company first. Call to find the name of the hiring manager for your desired position or the name of a recruiting specialist to whom you should address your cover letter. By making the effort to connect with a real person, you're demonstrating a willingness to exceed expectations and seek out answers on your own. If this information is inaccessible, use a greeting such as "Good Morning" or "Good Afternoon."

Proofread your customized cover letter before you send it. There is no excuse for typos, and if you're likely to miss details, ask a friend to proofread it as well.

### **3 KEY OPPORTUNITIES TO SEND COVER LETTERS:**

- When applying online for a job, upload a customized cover letter along with your resumé.
- After submitting your online application, follow up and thank the hiring manager for taking the time to review your application. First, identify the hiring manager for the position (hint: try a Google, social media, or professional networking site search to find a contact name). Then, email him or her a personalized version of your cover letter in the body of the message with your resumé attached.
- "Snail mail" can increase your visibility too! After you've applied online, send the hiring manager a short thank-you note version of your cover letter in a traditional mail format. As you did in your email, express your gratitude for his or her time and note your interest in the company expressing the desire to get his or her attention as reasons that triggered this "snail mail" approach.

## ***COVER LETTER TEMPLATE***

YOUR NAME

Address | City, State Zip | (xxx) xxx-xxxx | email@email.com | social media URL

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[DATE]

Contact person

Company name

Street address

City, State Zip

Re: Job title and/or job order number

Dear [Mr. or Ms. Last Name],

Develop a paragraph of two to three sentences that cover the following information: Why you are writing, what position you are targeting and where you saw the position advertised (or how you became aware of the position). This paragraph can also explain why you are currently looking for work (e.g., you recently graduated, moved to a new location, or are finishing a temporary assignment).

Provide an introductory statement to some of the highlights you are offering:

- List some of the job-specific skills that are relevant to the target job (or that are mentioned in the job posting) and how you acquired or applied those skills.
- List a few of your transferable skills that illustrate how you perform relevant tasks. Provide a supporting example.
- List an example of an accomplishment that was achieved by applying skills that are relevant to the target job.
- Say something about your interpersonal and/or communication skills and provide an example of how they impacted your performance.

For the closing paragraph, indicate that the resumé is enclosed, acknowledge its limitations and request an interview. Tell the employer how to reach you (you may also suggest the best times), and include any additional information that will confirm your interest in connecting.

Thank the employer for his or her time and consideration. Indicate an interest in the next step.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Enclosure