

Cover Letter Guide

Overview

A cover letter explains why you are a good fit for the job. It allows you to elaborate on your resume with specific examples that build a case why you should be invited for an interview. Always include a cover letter with a job application, even if one is not required on the job posting.

Salutation

Open the letter with a formal salutation. Try to identify the person who has the power to hire you in that department or organization. Use the directory on the company website or even call their help desk directly and ask to whom to address the cover letter. Spell their name and title correctly and include their credentials.

- Dear Dr. Martinez or Dear Ms. Martinez, PhD
- Dear Hiring Manager or Dear Search Committee

First Paragraph: The Introduction

Explain why you are sending this letter and what specific opportunity you are applying for, including the position number if it is in the announcement. This paragraph will also mention the person who referred you to this position or how you heard about it. Include a one-sentence introduction of why you are a good fit for the position.

Second Paragraph: The Argument

Describe what you have to offer the employer, forming an argument why you should be called in for an interview. Tell a story that specifically states how your skills and experience meet the needs of the job description. Remember, you are interpreting your resume, not repeating it. Support each statement you make with an example. Knowing your audience is key. For example, if your field is something traditional like accounting, use more traditional language and formatting, while other fields might permit more creative ways to tell your story. This paragraph is a persuasive argument to convince the reader to interview you for the position in person.

Third Paragraph: The Conclusion

This closing paragraph should be simple and designed to reiterate your interest in the position and the organization. Express your gratitude for their attention and mention an interview or meeting, if appropriate, which will hopefully spark an invitation to extend the conversation.

Quick Tips

- Always include a customized cover letter for professional job or internship applications, even if it is not listed as a requirement
- Your cover letter should be no longer than one page
- Specifically address your letter to a person (if possible)
- Customize your letter to the requirements of the position and directly to the employer's needs
- Demonstrate knowledge of your reader and his/her organization
- Your letter should be easy to read and free of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors
- Have someone with writing and language proficiency proofread your letter

Cover Letter Example

LOUIE LOBO

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April 14, 2020

Mr. James Yazzi
Human Resources Manager
The Company, Inc.
201 4th Street
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Dear Mr. Yazzi:

I was excited to learn about the Fundraising Specialist position (job posting #01234) from your HR Recruiter, Gina Trujillo. As a career fair attendee, I had the pleasure of meeting her at The University of New Mexico (UNM) last week. Ms. Trujillo piqued my interest in the opportunity at The Company, Inc. I am inspired by a company whose mission is to assist individuals in finding adequate resources and financial assistance to start their small business. My experience in event management, my skills in customer service, and my success in fundraising make me a competitive candidate for this position.

As a recent graduate from UNM with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, I learned about the goal proximity effect: the closer a campaign is to its fundraising goal, the more likely people are to donate. As the Marketing Chair for LoboTHON, I applied this concept to potential donors, resulting in more than a 75% increase in fundraising during that year. I was also the contact person for the event coordination of the last two annual fundraising events. Working as a Volunteer Mentor for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central New Mexico, I discovered a desire to help the community at large as well as developed a knack for customer service. I also contributed to fundraising efforts via my own social media output for the organization. I believe I can apply all of these skills in a dynamic environment such as The Company.

Thank you for your time and consideration for this position. I look forward to discussing my qualifications and how I might support your organization in achieving its goals. I hope to discuss my qualifications with you in an in-person interview.

Kind Regards,
Louie Lobo