

HELPFUL HINTS FOR WRITING A PERFECT COVER LETTER

HINT #1: Use Correct Name and Title

The first step in writing a perfect cover letter is to address the letter to a particular person by their name and job title. Make sure that the person to whom you are writing is also the person who is directly involved in the hiring decisions. It is also very crucial that you call the company if you are unsure of the person's name conducting the interviews, as well as how to correctly spell their name and what position they hold.

HINT #2: Personalize Your Cover Letter

Many employers who receive a large amount of correspondence letters (especially resumes) have developed reading techniques to rapidly look over their mail. With thousands of resumes and cover letters to read, employers do not have time to read over every word of every letter they receive. Therefore, if nothing strikes the employer's interest as they rapidly skim through the letters, they will disregard the letter before even getting through the first paragraph. This is why personalizing the opening paragraph in your cover letter is crucial in grabbing the reader's attention.

One way to personalize the letter is to show your knowledge of the organization, such as their products, services, or organizational structure. This can easily be done in one sentence.

Here are some examples of personalizing the opening sentence of the cover letter to grab the reader's attention:

Mr. Kendall from your marketing department informed me that you are looking for a highly qualified individual to fill the position of marketing supervisor....

I was extremely impressed when I read that your company had recently been ranked as one of the top ten fastest grossing firms in the Midwest...

I was very pleased to hear that XYZ, Incorporated is looking for a qualified person to work as a manager trainee. My experience would be ideal for your company...

Hint #3: Communicate What You Can Do For the Company

The primary interest of an employer when searching for qualified prospects is to look for “what value the potential employee has for their company”. The function of the body of the cover letter is to communicate to the reader that you have the ability to provide relevant and significant value to their company. You must provide relevant and noteworthy information to affirm to the reader that you are the ideal candidate. The body of the cover letter should express, through your experience and credentials, that you would be a great asset to the company.

***** IMPORTANT ***** Never include any negative comments about the company in your cover letter and never communicate the attitude of “what the company can do for you”.

Here are some examples of how to show that you can benefit the company:

I feel that my ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines has proven that I can successfully face the challenges of a competitive environment...

My two summers of internship experience at a major marketing firm gave me the knowledge and skills I need to be successful in an administrative marketing position with your company.

Hint #4: Professionalism Versus Friendliness; Self-confidence Versus Arrogance

Another key to writing a successful cover letter is to maintain a

friendly, but professional writing style. You should always tailor your letter to the reader so that they can clearly see that you are very interested in working for their organization.

Hint #5: Be Courteous and Take Initiative When Appropriate in the Closing Paragraph

Often times, a prospective employer may not have the time to call back every job applicant. To ensure that you get some sort of response to your correspondence, you should initiate the follow-up contact. Don't be pushy, rather be positive about your desire to get the position. If you indicate in your letter that you will be calling to schedule an interview, try to call within two or three days after the letter has arrived at the company. This way the employer will have a better chance of remembering your letter.

Here are some examples of how to cordially state that you will contact the employer:

Thank you for you for your time and consideration. I will contact you during the week of January 16 to further discuss my future with your organization.

I look forward to discussing the ways you feel my background and skills will benefit your company...