

Cover Letter Guidelines

1. Selling yourself - A cover letter introduces you, creates potential employers attention. The chances of getting employers attention to your resume and get an interview increases with the quality of your Cover Letter, so watch out for grammar and typographical errors.

2. The opening paragraph - The first or opening paragraph should be designed to create attention and therefore should contain the following sample opening: summary, name, request and question.

3. The middle paragraph - The middle paragraph should create desire. Choose your strongest trait and expand on them, some of the ways to do it could be to emphasize: education, work experience, ability to work with others, interest in your field, interest in the company and responsibilities on previous assignments. You may want to reemphasize certain points given in the resume or bring out additional facts.

4. The closing paragraph - The closing paragraph calls for action. After you have built up a desire, you should make it easy for the employer to "buy". State when you will be available to talk to the employer and be specific –give your telephone number.

5. Paper and Format – The type of stationery you use for your Cover Letter is important. Some of the guidelines and recommendations are: use the same stationery that you used for CV, use high-quality bond, avoid using stationery from your present work, as it leaves an unpleasant impression. Follow the same format rules that you would for a standard business letter. Preferably address the letter to the person who has the power to hire and use Ms. to address a woman and Mr. to a man in charge. While answering a "blind ad" from a newspaper, use "Dear Sir or Madam" as the salutation.

6. Omit Salary History – Including the information on your salary history neither is nor recommended for many reasons. First, mentioning your highest salary may be misleading to your future employer and eliminate you from consideration. Second, you do not want an employer to make you a "low – ball" salary offer based on your previous low salary. The best way to respond to the request to include your salary history would be: "I am hesitant to mention salary requirements in a letter of this nature, but I will be happy to furnish such information when we speak. My primary goal is to attain a position that will utilize my talents and experience."

7. Proofread – Eliminate all the mistakes in grammar and typos, having at least one other person read and proofread your cover letter.

8. Keep a copy – Keep a copy of your letter as you mail out resumes so that you can follow up by telephoning for an interview. If you have been turned down for an interview, consider sending thank-you letters anyway, as it will leave a favourable impression on the employer.