



## Cover Letter Development

Each time you mail, fax, or email your résumé, you should send a cover letter with it. A cover letter is a more informal and personal introduction to you and your skills and experience than your résumé. Unlike a résumé, in a cover letter you can let some of your personality and unique qualities come out which may appeal to the employer. In fact, employers are more likely to review a résumé sent with a cover letter than one without.

### Technical Aspects

- No longer than one page (standard 8 ½ x 11 in., white paper)
- No more than four paragraphs
- Margins: ½ to ¾ inch on all sides
- Font size: professional font (e.g. Times New Roman, Arial, Courier); 10 or 12 pt. size

### Content and Organization

1. Address to particular individual (name and title). If no name, then to HR or Personnel director, or department head of the department in which you wish to work.
2. Statements of how your skills and experience will contribute to the success of the company
  - 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph: Write a concise statement of your work experience or skills and affirm that experience or those skills will benefit the company. Here you will want to mention the company by name; don't merely say "your company." If your letter is an answer to an advertisement, mention where and when you saw the ad.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> (and 3<sup>rd</sup> if necessary) paragraph: Here is where you explain how you will benefit the company. If you mention a skill you have, also write specifically how that skill will benefit the employer. (This also works in the interview phase.) You should highlight some significant parts of your résumé, describe a specific situation in which you contributed to a positive outcome, and expand on some accomplishments you didn't have room for in your résumé.
3. Brief conclusion that invites the employer to follow up on your letter and résumé.
  - This last part is a simple, positive, yet ambitious expression of your desire for an interview. Be bold! Ask, "When can we arrange an interview?" not "Hope to hear from you soon" or "Thanks for your time." Repeat your contact information (phone and email).
4. Remember your business letter etiquette:
  - Return address and phone number in top right or left corner
  - Place date underneath your address
  - Employer's full address, flush left margin
  - Greeting (Dear...; To Whom It May Concern)
  - No need to indent paragraphs, but double space between them
  - Salutation (Sincerely, Yours Truly, etc.)
  - Signature
  - Your name, typed below your signature
  - Type "Enclosure" or "Encl." if you send your résumé with it