

# How to Write A Cover Letter



**ANNA MARIA**  
COLLEGE

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## **Cover Letters**

Your cover letter is just as important as your resume and you need to give it as much attention. Your resume is an outline of your experiences and skills. The job description or posting outlines the attributes of the successful candidate. Your cover letter is the first opportunity to link the two together in the mind of the hiring manager. If you are not successful, you won't be invited for the interview. A good cover letter will not just highlight experiences already on your resume; it will align those experiences with the requirements of the job.

This document contains many useful tips to develop an effective cover letter, but the single most important advice you can receive is to ***write a unique cover letter for each job application you submit***. This will ensure you are describing how your skills correlate with the specific job you are applying for and will also prevent critical errors such as telling "Company A" that you are excited to bring your skills to "Company B."

Finally, remember that in many cases the cover letter will be the potential employer's first impression of you. You only have one chance to make a first impression, make it a good one!

## **Before Writing Your Cover Letter**

### **Know The Employer's Name**

- Before writing your cover letter, research the company to find out the name of the hiring manager or head of the department. If you cannot find that information in the posting or on the company website, make a phone call.
  - Never address, "To Whom It May Concern." If you must, use a phrase such as "To the Search Committee" or "To the Hiring Manager"
- Addressing employers by their name in emails, on the phone, and in person shows them you are resourceful and that you care about the position you are applying for.
  - Don't forget to use Dr., Mr. or Ms. in front of their last name whenever addressing them.

### **Research the Company**

- Find the organization's mission statement and be prepared to describe how your skills and personal philosophies connect with the mission.
- Research recent accomplishments made by the organization and refer to them, showing how you can contribute to future similar successes.

## **Analyze the Job Description**

- The cover letter is your opportunity to illustrate how your skills will fulfill the employer's needs. Use the language from the description in your cover letter.
- Use specific examples of previous jobs, academic projects or volunteer experiences that have utilized skills described in the job description.

## **Important Points to Remember When Writing**

### **Use Proper Formatting and Grammar**

- Your ability to compose a professional document shows that you are able to present yourself in a professional manner.
- Proofread your letter several times for misspellings and grammar mistakes. Do not rely solely on the spellcheck feature of your word processing program. Also, show your letter to someone you trust to give you honest feedback, such as a teacher, an advisor or a tutor in the Student Success Center.

### **Make the Letter Clear and Simple**

- Your resume will go into detail about your accomplishments. Your cover letter should highlight your top one or two qualifications and show the employer how they qualify you for the job. Don't make your cover letter overly complicated with too many details. Be specific and where possible, quantify your successes by listing increases in sales, for instance.
- Keep your cover letter to one page.

### **Sending Your Resume and Cover Letter in an Email?**

#### **Remember these helpful tips:**

- Take the time to attach your documents to the email.
- Employers will appreciate it. Indicate that you have attached your resume and cover letter in your email.
  - Example: "I have attached my resume and cover letter."
- Keep your email short, maybe one paragraph long; emails that are short are more likely to be read by an employer than longer emails.
- Remember to put the job title in the subject line of the email.

## Write a first sentence that will encourage the reader to keep reading

- There are two basic choices for the opening sentence of your cover letter:
  - **Basic:** “I am writing to apply for the position of \_\_\_\_\_ as posted in \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - **Trending now:** a statement that allows the manager to see you in the position, such as: “You are looking for a sharp Registered Nurse with great attention to detail and excellent skills. My education and training make me an ideal candidate for this position.”
- **DO NOT** start a sentence with “my name is...” Your name will appear in your signature line and possibly your letterhead; you do not need to include it in the body of the letter.

## Brag about yourself, but make sure the employer will see a benefit for the company

- Open your second paragraph with a statement about how they will benefit from you as an employer.
  - I am the perfect candidate for this position because...
- Tell them why you should be the top candidate for the position. Remember, it’s not just about you; it’s about how you fit in the organization.

## Bullet Your Qualifications and Accomplishments

- In your third paragraph, consider using bullet points to list the top qualifications you have for the position and give short descriptions.
- This is a great organization tactic because it will draw the reader’s eye to the bullets and encourage him or her to read the entire letter.
- Bullet accomplishments or skills that relate directly to the organization mission or the job posting. Use the employer’s language to create a positive impression.

## Give a Clear Statement of Contact

- State specifically a time and day when you will get in touch with them.
  - Example: I will call within the next week to discuss my interest in the position.
- Include contact information clearly so they can get in touch with you first if needed.

January 5, 2018

Mr. Smith  
Hiring Manager  
Katz Media Group  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am writing to apply for the position of Media Sales Assistant with Katz Media Group as posted on Monster.com. I have been active in local media as a volunteer and employee for the past four years and would be able to bring that experience and passion to your company. I am confident that my degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing makes me a very strong candidate for this position.

I have enclosed my resume for your review. I have had several positions with increasing responsibilities that required excellent customer service skills. In addition to those experiences, I am further qualified by:

- The ability to manage multiple responsibilities and complete simultaneous projects within deadline;
- Prior knowledge of business software including spreadsheets and scheduling programs;
- Experience mediating disputes with customers.

As I have been searching for my next position, it has been important to me to find a company that has values that are congruent with my own. The core values of Katz Communications, trust, integrity, respect, excellence, courage and dedication not only speak to me, they also describe who I strive to be as a person. I am confident that I would be an excellent fit for this position and that I am someone who can represent your core values to your customers and to the community at large.

I hope that you will provide me with the opportunity to interview. I will contact you for a follow up next week to answer any questions you have.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

B. Lou Amcat  
50 Sunset Lane

Paxton, MA

[B\\_L\\_Amcat@amcats.edu](mailto:B_L_Amcat@amcats.edu)

508-849-XXXX