



Job Search Marketing Resource Kit

Cover Letter Writing Guide

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THE MYSTERY BEHIND THE COVER LETTER |

The purpose of the cover letter is provide a more detailed view into who you are as a candidate, and what you are bringing to the table in terms of your relevant skills, experience, and knowledge. But even more importantly, the way that the cover letter differs from your resume is that the cover letter serves as your platform for making a connection between the qualifications in your resume, and your personal interests in the role at hand. This might include addressing areas such as:

- **Why you are interested in working for that particular organization.**

Think about what draws you to the company, things such as the work they do which you're familiar with and admire, their favorable reputation within the industry, an interesting company culture that you feel you fit well into, recent news about the company, involvement in philanthropic endeavors, etc.

- **Why are you looking to transition into a new industry?**

If your goal is to move into an organization within a different industry, you will want to discuss what interests you specifically about that industry, as well as what kinds of qualifications and skills you have that would be transferrable. Hiring managers are always concerned about whether or not the transition will be easy for someone who lacks specific industry experience. You want to communicate that you do have knowledge and understanding of the industry and what would be required for someone looking for a position within it.

- **Why are you looking to make a career change?**

If you are changing career focuses, the cover letter is a great place to discuss your reasons and interests behind doing so. Whether it's personal, professional, or both, you will want to make that connection to give yourself a bit of leverage. If your target field is of personal interest, what kinds of independent projects, research, or reading do you do on a regular basis, and what kind of reward do you get out of it? If it's a professional interest, how might it draw upon your best talents and skills that have helped in a previous career path?

- **What other unique attributes do you bring to the table that may not be evident on your resume?**

A resume follows a very formal structure that doesn't always allow for inclusion of certain information that might be pertinent or interesting to hiring managers. Things like travel experience, personal projects, side businesses or freelance work, or other outside activities and interests are good examples. Perhaps you have a personal blog that caters to a specific subject matter area that your audience might find interesting. It may not fit or be appropriate for your resume, but the cover letter is an excellent space to include these additional bits of information, so long as they're relevant.

COVER LETTER 'ETIQUETTE' |

Keep It to 1 Page

Often times, cover letters aren't even read, as recruiters and hiring managers are in a hurry, and typically receiving resume submissions in high volume. As such, it's likely that they will skim through your documents, rather than reading through in detail. It's important not to make your document too lengthy, as you risk losing their attention, and thus the impact of your message. Communicate your message in as concise and direct a manner as possible.

Use the Same Font & Formatting as Your Resume

Your resume and cover letter are part of your overall branding package, and should follow a similar look and feel when it comes to formatting. You can use the same header on your cover letter as your resume, giving it more of a "portfolio" presentation. The same goes for other documents you may decide to send, such as a list of references, a list of publications, or examples of your work.

Tailor It to Fit the Role

Your cover letter is really your best platform for communicating any information that doesn't necessarily fit into your resume, and this is an important part of the marketing process. Utilize your cover letter to "fill in the gaps" and give context to the skills and experience in your resume, by making the connection between your qualifications, and why you want to work for that particular organization, role, or industry. If you're a fan of the company's work, give examples of recent work they've done that affected you and why. If you're motivated by a personal interest in the organization or industry, explain why it's an area you're interested in pursuing. If you're changing careers, address your motivations and reasons for doing so, and how you plan to navigate that transition. The more you can tie in specific examples of why hiring you would be a benefit to both you and them, the better.

Close With a Call to Action

Ask for the interview by suggesting that you'd appreciate the opportunity to discuss your qualifications and the needs of the role in more depth. It sounds like a no-brainer, yet it shows that you're not only confident in your value, but also aware that it's just as much about satisfying their interests as a company as yours as candidate wanting to work for them.

Utilize the PDF Format

Good formatting can get lost in translation, and just as with resumes, saving your document as a PDF is your best bet for ensuring that your cover letter looks professional and presentable upon receipt. PDF format universally compatible on Mac and PC platforms, and you don't have to worry about fonts, margins, or anything else that is subject to the default settings of the software version your audience is using to open it.

SAMPLE COVER LETTERS |

Example #1 (Direct Contact)

Attn: Jane Smith
Company XYZ
381 Union Street,
New York, NY 11231

November 20, 2012

Dear Ms. Smith,

I'm reaching out with interest in consideration for the Executive Assistant opportunity with Company XYZ. I am a senior-level administrative professional with more than 8 years of experience providing office management and operational support. My strengths focus around managing office communications, appointment scheduling, customer service, organizing data, and conducting and compiling research.

Since March 2010, I have been employed as an Executive Assistant with Brooklyn Resume Studio, supporting a staff of 3 with the day to day operations of the business, including scheduling and appointment setting, follow up communications, working with outside insurance vendors on verifications, and maintaining patient data and records. While I have an extensive history working with organizations in the staffing industry, my passion is really around hospitality and tourism, and I'm confident that my experience would translate well to a travel agency like Company XYZ.

On a personal level, I consider myself a quick learner, avid multi-tasker, and someone who possesses strong leadership and communication skills. I'm proactive and self-directed, able to jump into a project or task with little supervision, and understand what needs to be done. With regard to professional development, I have a strong interest in the creative, technology and startup space, and am self-studying several programming languages and design platforms including Adobe Creative Suite, HTML and CSS.

I am available immediately, and would love the opportunity to discuss my qualifications and the needs of the position in more depth. Thank you in advance, and I look forward to speaking with you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Dana Leavy-Detrick

dana@brooklynresumestudio.com | (617) 312-7892

SAMPLE COVER LETTERS |

Example #2 (No Direct Contact)

January 10, 2013

Hello-

My name is Dana Leavy-Detrick, and I am a seasoned Creative Director with over 15 years experience in integrated marketing design and communications programs. I am reaching out with interest in the Associate Creative Director opportunity with Company XYZ.

What I believe I bring to the table is a unique background and skill set, encompassing extensive international experience and multicultural exposure in communications and visual design, serving some of the world's largest brands. My experience expands across creative and art direction, branding, design, team leadership, and business development, with additional expertise around strategy development, brand development and management, visual design, creative and art direction, pitching and business development, mentoring and leadership. I know how to bring different teams together and work successfully as a group under a cohesive creative vision.

At this level in my career, what really draws me to a position is a mix of the work it has to offer, and being able to identify on a personal level with the values and the mission of the organization. Your company describes itself as "an agency where people like to work, and one that clients like to work with." My goal is to become a valued and contributing part of a great team that produces interesting and impactful work for its customers.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my background in more depth, and how I believe I can leverage my experience to contribute to the role. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dana Leavy-Detrick

dana@brooklynresumestudio.com

(617) 312-7892

For Additional Tips & Resources Visit www.bklynresumestudio.com