

## Cover Letter Writing - 3 Easy Paragraphs

- Don't stress! Follow these guidelines and remember - this letter is about what you can do for the company, not what they can do for you.
- Cover letters give you a chance to sell yourself to a **specific** job and show how you are a good fit for the **position**. Your ultimate goal is to convey this simple point: "You need it, I have it." Showing overall passion for the company is important too, but job specifics are crucial.
- Cover letters give you a chance to speak on behalf of your resume and experiences, since the things that you've done might not speak for themselves or be an exact fit. Your job is to show the employer why your past experience is transferable and relevant to the job you're applying for. Tell them why your experience should matter to them.
- In order to be effective, you need to write a new cover letter for each job (unless the job requirements are identical, you can sell yourself the same way - but be **very** careful doing this; if you forget to change the company names, you're doomed!)
- Address your letter to a specific person if possible, otherwise use Dear Recruiting Committee or Dear Hiring Manager – NOT "To whom this may concern". (Understand that many Human Resources Departments do not make finding their recruiters easy for fear of being overwhelmed with emails and phone calls.)
- Always use a cover letter even if they don't ask for one. After all, you have to say **something** when sending your resume!
- Your cover letter can be the body of the email with your resume as an attachment. If you are using your cover letter in the body of an email you do not need to do the standard business letter format you will see on the samples with physical addresses.
- A cover letter should be 3 paragraphs – Introduction, Sales Pitch and Conclusion.

### **Paragraph #1 - Introduction** (*Tell the employer why you are writing and interested in the job*)

- Who are you? (Not your name!) Your year in school, school, degree
- Why are you writing/what position are you applying for? You can include how you found the posting and if you were personally referred or have a contact, drop the name here.
- **Why are you interested in the position?** This is so important, companies want to talk to people that really want to talk to them. Be genuine.
- Show your industry/company knowledge and excitement to be a part of it. Compliment them.

### **Paragraph #2 - Sales Pitch** (*Show the employer you are a good fit for the position and get an interview*)

- This is the happy marriage paragraph. It should mention both you and the employer. A paragraph full of "I's" is a one-sided relationship.
- Choose 3 skills/traits the employer is requiring and show how you meet these requirements. Use the job description and qualifications to help you. You only need to address 3 and show how these experiences will be helpful to them. This is essentially a 6 sentence paragraph. A sentence about your qualification and one about how it relates to them. Do this 3 times.
- **DO NOT** restate everything that is on your resume. They can read. Instead think about why these experiences make you a good fit for this position and then make a connection to what they need and what you have.

### **Paragraph #3 – Conclusion**

- Restate in one sentence how you can add value to their firm.
- Show your interest in the company and thank them for their consideration.
- If you do have a contact name and can follow up, let them know you will and then **DO IT!** (1-2 weeks is a good timeframe.) If there is not a contact or an email and you have applied through a website, there's not a lot you can do. You can try to find an alum (that you know) that works there to use as a connection, but if they don't know you, they won't vouch for you.