

# COVER LETTERS

## Introducing Yourself

Every resume you send, fax or e-mail needs its own cover letter. Sending a resume without a cover letter is like starting an interview without shaking hands. The best cover letters spark the employer's interest and create an impression of competence.

Cover letters are an opportunity to convey your focus and energy. "If you don't have a lot of experiences, use the cover letter to show you have enthusiasm." says Sharon Swann, manager of administrative services for a management consulting firm in Menlo park, California. "Writing a strong cover letter and then calling to follow up shows the employer you have drive and interest." Although you should feel free to consult references and models, use your own words when writing a cover letter; don't mimic another person's writing style.

### QUICK TIPS ABOUT YOUR RESUME!

- ✓ Every resume you send, fax or e-mail needs its own cover letter
- ✓ Every cover letter should fit on one page
- ✓ Send you letter to a specific person rather than to an office whenever possible.
- ✓ The first few sentences tell which hob you are applying for.
- ✓ Briefly explain your qualifications without simply repeating your

## Parts of the Cover Letter

Cover letters should be written in standard business format with your and the reviewer's addresses at the top and your signature above your typed name at the bottom. (E0mailed cover letters do not include mailing addresses.) All letters should be single spaced, flush left, with each paragraph followed by a blank line. Use professional, polite words. Revealing your personality is fine, as long as your style conforms to business protocol. For a sample cover letter see enclosed.

Most cover letters are two or three paragraphs long. Every cover letter should fit on one page and contain the following four parts:

- Salutation
- Opening
- Body
- Conclusion

### Salutation

Whenever possible, send your letter to a specific person rather than to an office. Consider how differently you respond to a letter addressed to you, as opposed to one addressed to "Occupant". If you do not know whom to write, call the company and ask who is hiring for the position. Check that the name you use is spelled correctly and the title is accurate. Pay close attention to the Mr. Or Ms. Before gender-neutral names. Finally, use a colon after the name, not a comma.

### **Opening**

The first few sentences of your cover letter should tell the reviewer which job you are applying for and the connection you have to the company. If someone the reviewer knows suggested you apply, mention that recommendation. If you are responding to an advertisement, refer to it and the source that published it.

### **Body**

The next portion of your cover letter is a brief explanation of your qualifications. Don't simply repeat your resume; summarize your most relevant qualifications. Leave a blank line between each paragraph. When writing a business letter, be careful to remember that conciseness is very important. In the first paragraph, consider a friendly opening and then a statement of the main point. The next paragraph should begin justifying the importance of the main point. In the next few paragraphs, continue justification with background information and supporting details. The closing paragraph should restate the purpose of the letter and, in some cases, request some type of action.

### **Closing**

The closing begins at the same horizontal point as your date and one line after the last body paragraph. Capitalize the first word only (for example: Thank you) and leave four lines between the closing and the sender's name for a signature. If a colon follows the salutation, a comma should follow the closing; otherwise, there is no punctuation after the closing.

# SAMPLE COVER LETTER

1090 Peachtree Lane, #4  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
404/555-3030

Ms. Judy Sumner  
Atlanta Board of Education  
45 Peachtree Blvd.  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Ms. Sumner,

Perhaps I am the "multi-talented teacher" you seek in your "Multi-Talented Teacher" advertisement in today's Atlanta Constitution. I'm a versatile teacher, ready to substitute, if necessary, as early as next week. I have the solid teaching experience you specify as well as the strong computer skills you desire.

I am presently affiliated with a highly regarded private elementary school. Mr. Craig, the headmaster, will certainly give you a good reference. The details of your advertisement suggest to me that the position will involve many of the same responsibilities that I am currently performing.

In addition to the planning, administration, and student-parent counseling duties I highlight in my resume, please note that I have a master's degree as well as a teaching certificate from the state of Georgia.

Knowing how frantic you must be without a fifth grade teacher, I will call you in a few days. Or if you agree upon reviewing my letter and resume that I am the teacher you need, call me at the home number listed above, or at 555-7327 during business hours.

Thanking you most sincerely for your time and consideration.

Cordially,

Maria Plazza-Smith

## **SAMPLE E-MAIL COVER LETTER**

Date: Tues, 15 May 2007 19:52:59 -0700 (EDT)  
From: kevin lee smith [ksmith@yahoo.com]  
Subject: Seasoned Sales Rep With MBA Ideal for Regional Sales Manager  
(mtt-01/3439)  
To: scott.hent@marriott.com  
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii

Dear Mr. Hent,

Having broken sales records and exceeded sales quotas in all my previous positions and recently completed my MBA in marketing from the Stern School of Managerial Leadership at Florida State University, I am an ideal candidate for the regional sales manager position at Marriott Vacation Club International.

As the leading sales representative for Disney Vacation Club, I developed key sales material, trained new sales reps, and reinvented the way club memberships are sold. My team's revenue was more than double the average for the entire operation.

The vacation club industry is a dynamic and growing industry, and I am convinced I can help Marriott grow its reputation and dominant position in the industry.

We should meet to discuss the position. I will contact you in the next 10 days to arrange an interview. Should you have any questions before that time, please feel free to call me at 904-555-2341 or email me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cordially,

Kevin Lee Smith