A4TD ASSOCIATES FOR TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

ADVANCING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR MATURE WORKERS SINCE 1983

Network to Work Meeting
April 2022
RESOURCE DOCUMENT – *COVER LETTERS*

What Makes for a Good Cover Letter?

1. Concise and only one page.

2. Clearly expresses the skills and talents you bring to the job.

3. Tailored to the company and the job for which you are applying. Not generic.

4. Addressed to the proper individual. Find the name and spell it correctly. Otherwise, use "Dear Hiring Manager". **DON'T** say "Dear Sir / Madam".

5. Verify that you have the company's full and correct name and it is spelled properly.

6. No spelling or grammatical errors. Proofread by yourself and another.

7. Uses the key words in the job description.

8. Free from personal detail not related to the job.

9. Doesn't speak poorly about past jobs or bosses.

10. Mentions the name of anyone you know who works in the company – and has a good reputation.

How to Write your Cover Letter

1. Start with a brain dump; jot down everything you might want to say.

2. Then try to cut it in half.

3. Keep specific statements. Delete generic statements and fluff.

4. Focus on how you can help the company reach its goals.

5. Focus on stating things that aren't (obviously) in your resume.

6. Match your letter to the job description and fill in gaps that your resume doesn't address.

7. Be concise in your use of adjectives and adverbs. For example: say "passionate learner" instead of "very passionate and focused learner".

8. Use practical examples of your professional success in applying the skills listed in the job description.

9. Include the two best examples that explain why you are a great candidate for the job.

10. Save your cover letter on the computer in a place you can easily find. Save as either a PDF (pdf) or a Word (.doc) file type. Name the document something like **"John Doe – Customer Service Rep Cover Letter"**. If you have more than one cover letter, be sure to give each a clear and distinct name so that you don't accidentally send the wrong one. Include the company name if needed.

Avoid Ageism

1. Don't mention your long number of years in the workforce. Say something like "extensive experience".

2. Don't include graduation dates from high school or college on your resume.

3. Don't share too many examples of experiences that qualify you for the job.

4. Show your abilities with current technology. List the programs and equipment you can use.

5. Focus on your enthusiasm, flexibility and ability to learn new things. Show examples of self-motivated learning, such as the online learning you have done during the pandemic.

6. Avoid outdated buzzwords like "To Whom it May Concern", "Dear Sir / Madam", "team player", etc. Google "cover letter descriptors that are outdated" for help.

Sending a Cover Letter via Email

Follow these guidelines to compose an email for sending a cover letter.

1. **Compose:** Open your email program and click on "Compose".

2. **Employer email:** Enter the employer's email address in the "To" line. Be sure to proof read it carefully to make sure you have entered it correctly.

3. **Subject Line:** Make your subject line informative and concise, such as **"Customer Service Representative Cover Letter – (your name)**.

4. **Greeting:** Professional and neutral, such as **"Dear Hiring Manager**" or **"Dear Sandra Smith"**.

5. **Send yourself a copy:** Enter your email address in the cc: or bcc: line. This way you can refer back to your email prior to any interview.

6. **At the bottom include your email signature and contact information:** This makes it easy for the hiring manager to get in touch with you. Include your first and last name, your email address, and your phone number. Proofread and double check that it is correct.

7. **Your Email address:** should be professional and include your full name or partial name and initials. Avoid nicknames and most numbers. If you must use a number, make it simple and easy to remember, but NOT your birth year.

8. **Follow the employer's stated guidelines for including the cover letter:** Email cover letters can generally be sent one of two ways: as an email attachment or as the body of your email. Before sending your cover letter, check the company's job application guidelines. Some prefer attachments, while others want it to be in the body of your email message. Keep in mind that if you don't follow the employer's instructions, your application may not be considered.

   Note: If the employer doesn't specify how to send your cover letter, it is best to copy and paste your cover letter into the body of the email.

9. **If sending as an email attachment:**

   a. Compose your email as listed above.

   b. In the body, be sure to include a brief message such as:

      Dear Ms. Garcia,

      Please see my attached resume and cover letter for the [Job Title] position.

      Let me know if you would like any more information.

      Thank you for your consideration.

      Jacob King

   c. Click on the "paper clip" icon in your email or any other symbol that means "attach a file". You will be brought to the menu or listing of all the files on your computer.

   d. Find your cover letter and click on it; this will attach it to your email.

   e. It is a good idea to first send a test email to yourself with the attached cover letter. Open the received email and open the attached letter. **Review it to be sure it displays well and is the correct letter!**

10. **If sending the letter as the body of an email:**

    a. Type your greeting, such as "Dear Hiring Manager". Hit the Enter button twice, to create a blank line before your content.

    b. Copy and paste your cover letter into the body of the email.

        i. The best way to do this is to copy the content from your original resume and cover letter, and then "Paste Special, Unformatted Text" into the email message.

        ii. You can "Paste Special" by left-clicking inside the body of the email and selecting "Paste Special" from the dropdown menu.

        iii. Since you likely don't know what email provider the employer is using, this simple approach is best. The employer may not see a formatted message the same way you do, so if pasted as plain text, you can be sure it will render correctly.

    c. Delete the employer's address and the date from the top of the letter.

    d. Format as necessary to ensure it displays properly in your email.

    e. Use the default font and style of your email program.

11. **Before sending:** Proofread multiple times; double check the email address for the employer; and if you are sending the letter as an attachment, make sure it is attached!

Sources:

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