

HOW TO WRITE A WINNING COVER LETTER



If you're looking for a sample cover letter or some generic cover letter template you can easily duplicate, I'm going to give you some excellent advice:

Sample Cover Letters and Cover Letter Templates Don't Work!

Duplicating a sample cover letter is a sure-fire way to get your cover letter ignored completely. The best approach is to write a customized letter just as I advise you to customize your resume.

I hope this article will help you to do just that.

The Power of a Good Cover Letter

A persuasive, well-written, and original cover letter has power you can't afford to waste. It can be just as important as the resume itself for interview results. It tells the reader things your resume can't because of formatting, space, or style restrictions. **Don't waste this opportunity to persuade!**

The Cost of Bad Cover Letters:

A mediocre cover letter will usually be ignored, and the full weight of interview-getting falls on the shoulders of your resume. If your resume is equally mediocre, your job search is dead before it starts.

As a worst-case scenario, a poorly written cover letter can create a negative impression your resume will never shake off. In fact, there are some cover letters I've seen that are so bad, I've thrown them away rather than show them to a hiring manager because I knew they reflected badly on the candidate and would hurt their chances.

Many hiring managers feel that the cover letter more accurately reflects the "real world" ability of the candidate. Those managers make serious judgments while reading them.

Using a sample cover letter will tell the hiring manager you are boring and lazy. You can't afford that.

Advice, Tips, and Common Cover Letter Mistakes

Your cover letter should be targeted to a the same, specific position as your resume. Your resume and cover letter should work harmoniously for the same goal: Get your phone ringing.

Common Mistake: Cover letter is generic and not targeted.

It's imperative that your resume persuasively argue which specific problems you can solve for the hiring manager. Your cover letter should skillfully highlight where your skills match the critical success factors of the job. Imagine what the hiring manager might deem important for success and what problems he might be trying to solve with the hiring of a new person. Tell him what he wants to hear.

Common Mistake: Cover letter does not sell you as a value to the hiring manager.

The best cover letters are BRIEF. Half a page AT MOST.

Common Mistake: You guessed it. The darn thing is too long, too vague, and a waste of space. Long cover letters are NOT READ by anyone.

Your cover letter should ask for an interview.

Common Mistake: Most cover letters never ask the reader to do anything. It would seem that most applicants never expect to be called. Truly excellent candidates always expect to be called. Their cover letters politely communicate this to the reader and generate an impression that the candidate must therefore be good.

Cover Letters Are Critical

Many people think that a cover letter is not important. In fact, some folks ignore it altogether or just throw one in the envelope as an afterthought. On the contrary, the cover letter is SO IMPORTANT that it should NEVER be an afterthought. It's a key part of getting your resume noticed and deeply read.

Don't make the suicidal mistake of thinking the cover letter is not important.