

Guidelines for Writing Cover Letters

1. Write to a Particular Individual

Never address a letter, "To whom it may concern", no one needs junk mail
Always try to address a letter to a specific person, by name and title
Women should always be addressed as Ms., unless you know otherwise
When a name absolutely cannot be found, skip three spaces and begin your letter with no salutation

2. Provide an Appropriate Opening

State the reason for your correspondence
Refer to any prior contacts if appropriate
Refer to advertisement, where and when you learned about the position
Mention that your resume is attached

3. Personalize Your Content

Don't send the same form letter to everyone:
"Yes, Dave Smith, you have won one of the following useless and cheap prizes"
The content of the letter should reflect specific knowledge of the employer i.e.

- Major Products and Services
- Industry Ranking
- Future Plans
- Competitors

4. Target Your Skills and Experience

Your cover letter should reflect knowledge of the position and employer's needs
Emphasize skills that are most compatible with the needs of the employer and the requirements of the position
Present any relevant background information that may be of particular interest to the employer
Try to use similar phrases and terminology that is in the job description

5. Define the Next Step

Be assertive and confident, not aggressive or arrogant
Clearly indicate what you will do next:
"I will contact you on ... to verify receipt of this correspondence."
"I will contact you on ... to discuss possible opportunities to contribute to ..."
It is not recommended that you close the letter and leave it up to the employer to contact you, it really is not their responsibility
Use specific date as the contact time (and actually contact them) such as
"I will contact you on January 12, 2000 to..."

6. Make Absolutely NO Errors

Review the letters carefully for typographical, grammatical, or other errors
Have one or two others proof your materials as well

7. Use an Appropriate Format and Stationary

Standard business correspondence style is acceptable
Use good quality resume paper that matches your resume
A 9 ½ by 13 inch envelope is acceptable, this avoids folding the resume
Use address labels (typed, not handwritten)

NOTE: Always send a **Thank You Letter** after every interview. Refer to last page of this packet.