

## Writing Your Cover Letter

### A cover letter is ...

- An opportunity to demonstrate your enthusiasm for the position and knowledge of the company/organization.
- A sales tool that allows you to highlight relevant experience - though NOT a narrative of your resume.
- A professional business document that should be edited and double-checked for spelling and grammar errors.
- NOT the email that accompanies a resume you have submitted. While this correspondence should also be professional and without error, the email is simply a note. You should attach your cover letter with your resume - sometimes even combining them into one document if necessary.
- NOT the cover sheet for a fax. Like the email, this correspondence should be professional, but should be followed by a separate cover letter and resume.

**If you want the job, then you need a cover letter.** The cover letter supplements the resume and provides additional information that the reader does not find in the resume. Even if the job posting does not request a cover letter, or you were not specifically asked to submit a cover letter, it's highly recommended that you submit one.

The cover letter is your chance to talk about why you want to work for this company and to demonstrate what you know about the organization and/or industry. It's also a chance to show you are a strong and concise writer and can make a strong case for why *you* are the best fit.

### 6 Steps to Writing an Effective Letter

#### Step 1: Project Professionalism

- Use the same header as on your resume.
- Include a date, a job posting # if relevant and the contact information of the hiring company/organization.
- Keep the letter to one page.

#### Step 2: Address Your Letter

- Do your best to find an actual person to address your letter to. If you have to, address it to the title of the recipient (Production Manager, Office Manager or Search Committee). Avoid using "To Whom it May Concern".

#### Step 3: Demonstrate What You Know About The Company

- Write your letter in your own words. You want your letter to sound like you not like something out of a book or a cover letter template.
- Research the employer using the internet, by networking, visiting the employer, conducting informational interviews, and/or reading current information/editorials in journals or papers.
- Show that you know something about the company and the industry. Incorporate the company's reputation, goals, mission and/or vision and how you can help them accomplish these objectives.
- Match what the employer is looking for in the job description to what you have to offer. Use keywords and phrases provided in the job description and include them in your cover letter.

#### **Step 4: Express Your Enthusiasm For THAT Job With THAT Company**

- This is your chance to tell the employer why you are excited to work for them. Your excitement shouldn't indicate *your* needs. (For example: "I am so excited to work for your company because it's close to my home!") Instead it should show a genuine respect for and desire to work with the company you are applying to.

#### **Step 5: Be Specific About What You Have To Offer**

- Ask yourself, "How do I match what the employer is seeking?"
- Provide concrete examples of accomplishments that show value to the employer. Demonstrate this by using numbers and figures such as, "Increased profits by one million dollars" or "Improved productivity by 25%."
- Highlight the skills the employer requests in the job description and be sure to note these in your letter.

#### **Step: Take The Initiative**

- Ask for the interview and leave the door open for follow-up. Statements like "I look forward to hearing from you soon" are polite but generic in nature and don't demonstrate your initiative.

Instead, let the employer know....

- ✓ You would like to talk to them face to face.
- ✓ You will contact the employer in so many days to be sure they received all your materials

**Make sure you follow through and do what you stated in your cover letter!**

**For additional guidance on how to prepare your cover letter, register for LCWC's *Cover Letter* workshop.**

## COVER LETTER SAMPLE

**Peter Wolff**

1234 Denver Ave. ♦ Loveland, CO. 80538 ♦ (970) 555-1212 ♦ peterwolff@gmail.com

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October 28, 2012

Agrium, Inc.  
2915 Rocky Mountain Ave.  
Loveland, CO. 80538

**Re: Logistics position**

Your posting for a logistics position caught my interest. I am especially interested in the nature of your business, developing agricultural solutions that cover North and South America with more expansion to cover the entire world. With the changing global climate and population growth, food production will be even more crucial and I would be excited to let you know how I might be a fit for your company.

Enclosed is my resume for your review and consideration. In particular, I have extensive experience in organizing, preplanning and prioritizing company operations with successful results. I value teamwork and am able to work as a crewmember, but I have also worked on my own requiring little or no supervision once I determined what needed to be done to complete the task. I have experience in ordering and inventorying company parts and supplies, ensuring adequate supplies at all times.

Growing up around a farming environment gave me an appreciation for plant growth and food production and I find that global applications of agricultural solutions that benefits people to be exciting. My goal now is to find a group of professionals who are looking for an energetic and dedicated addition to their staff.

I am anxious to meet with you in person to discuss your needs and my qualifications. Please let me know if there is any additional information I can provide. I will follow up within the next few days and look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Peter Wolff