

CAREER FORWARD

THE EFFECTIVE
COVER LETTER



THE EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

A well-written cover letter should be a part of any job search strategy. It provides an additional opportunity to market yourself and can establish you as a serious candidate, as well as set you apart from other applicants. Follow the advice ahead to create a truly effective cover letter.



THE EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

What is a cover letter?

A cover letter is a letter of introduction that highlights your key accomplishments and qualifications for a job opening. A cover letter adds focus to your résumé and should leave the reader with an understanding of the type of position that you are seeking.

Unlike your résumé, your cover letter is an opportunity to reveal why you are passionate about the position, and should be used to convey pertinent information not captured in a traditional résumé format.

Even though much of the job application process is now online, few employers seriously consider a résumé that is not accompanied by a cover letter. Don't treat the cover letter as an afterthought in the application process—make the time

investment so that you increase your chances of receiving the coveted interview invitation.

- Tailor each cover letter to the position and employer.
- Be brief. Get to the point quickly. If it looks like a long read, it will likely be discarded.
- Identify yourself, leveraging any connection points you may have with the company or reader.
- Sell yourself! Show your passion and demonstrate your communication skills. Focus on your fit for the position and company, highlighting your 3 major accomplishments.
- Explain unique circumstances such as employment gaps, career changes, relocations, or re-introduction into the job market.
- Include your LinkedIn® profile and relevant website links as well as your reason for including them in your cover letter, but don't overdo it.
- End the letter by requesting an interview or meeting.

THE EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

COVER LETTER FORMAT

Use the following template to help you write an effective cover letter introduction, main body, and closing.

Your name
Mailing address
City, State, and ZIP Code
Telephone number(s)
Email address
LinkedIn profile

Today's date

Addressee's name
Professional title
Organization name
Mailing address
City, State, and ZIP Code

Dear Mr. (or Ms.) last name,

Introduction: Begin with a statement that establishes a connection with your reader, such as a headline or a probing question. Briefly state what job you are applying for.

Main body: The body should be one to two short paragraphs that make relevant points about your qualifications. Do not summarize your résumé! Choose some qualifications that really target the position you are interested in, but fight the tendency to oversell at this point. Demonstrate your passion and quickly share any additional information about yourself that could be relevant to the position.

Closing: Your closing should initiate action by explaining what you will do next (e.g., call the employer) or motivate the reader to contact you to set up an interview. Always close by showing appreciation.

Sincerely yours,

Your signature (handwritten)
Your name (typed)

Enclosure: Résumé

SAMPLE OF AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

THE EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

John Smith
123 Any Street
Anytown, AT 12345
123.456.7890
jsmith@anymail.com
LinkedIn profile URL

Today's date

Jane Jones
CEO
Any Company, Inc.
123 Any Street
Anytown, AT 12345

Dear Ms. Jones:

I read with interest your requirements for an account supervisor. I am interested in working for a dynamic and fast growing interactive marketing firm such as yours and have noted your progress since your company started in 2001.

In my position at Any Advertising, I was responsible for managing more than \$17 million in national advertising revenue, along with developing and executing new online and offline initiatives designed to motivate consumer purchases and increase revenue. As the lead member of the account team, I was responsible for moving overall client retention from 76 percent to 92 percent, as well as growing several key verticals. I believe I can bring a high level of expertise and experience to your organization while making an immediate impact.

The attached résumé and my LinkedIn profile provide more detail about my experience and accomplishments. If it appears that my qualifications meet your current needs, I would be happy to further discuss my background in a meeting with you. I will be contacting you the week of September 1 to follow up and schedule a personal interview. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

John Smith

Enclosure: Résumé

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EXIT



WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MOVING YOUR CAREER FORWARD? This document is an excerpt from our comprehensive *Career Forward* guide, which will help you make the most of your job search in today's competitive market. Download your complete guide today.

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