

COVER LETTER BUILDER

Workbook to create or update your cover letter



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WHY YOU NEED A COVER LETTER

The cover letter is an important part of your job application. It takes time and effort and may not seem worth it, but it is extremely beneficial to the employer who is trying to find the right person for the job.



Why You Need a Cover Letter

- Many employers consider it part of the application process and will throw away resumes that do not come with cover letters.
- Even if an employer doesn't require a cover letter, it will set you apart if you submit one with your resume.
- Employers see the cover letter as a way of getting to know you on a more personal level.
- It gives you the opportunity to express why you want the job. The resume is only able to show your experience and qualifications, but it can not express your passion or excitement.
- The cover letter shows your ability to write and convey ideas through writing.
- It can set you apart from other applicants who have the same qualifications as you.
- It gives you the opportunity to address any gaps in your employment.

Job Description

The first place to start when writing a cover letter is the job description. The job description lists the qualifications the employer is looking for. Your resume should cover most of the qualifications and experience, but there might be some things in your work history that you want to highlight to the employer.

For example, if the employer is looking for someone with 5 years of managerial experience the cover letter is a place for you to expand upon your experience and give more detail.

Why do you want the job?

The cover letter is also where you want to let the employer know why you want to work there. Employers want someone who is going to stick around for a while who has the same values or who is passionate about the work.

The cover letter is a place where you can share some of your story.

- If you are passionate about healthcare and have always wanted to work in that industry then share it.
- If you have always worked with tools since you were a kid and have a knack for fixing things then let them know.
- If you have always wanted to work for the company because of their values and product then make sure you cover it.

Now what if you just need the job for money. That's ok too. Try to identify something that drew you to the company or job that made you excited.

TIPS



- Try to identify the actual person that you will be sending your resume to. If you can't, then address the cover letter to "Dear Hiring Manager" or "To Whom it May Concern"
- Don't point out the skills you don't have. Just focus on the qualification that you match.
- Don't download a cover letter template and just change the name of the company. It will be obvious if you are using a generic template.
- Remember to have someone read your cover letter for spelling and grammar.

- Your cover letter should only be one page.
- Explain any large gaps on your resume. See next page.
- Share why you want to work at that company or why you want the job. Employers are interested to know why you applied.
- Focus on what you bring to the company (experience, skills, passion, etc.).

Dealing with Gaps or Issues

GAPS

Gaps are large spaces in your work history where you weren't able to work. Gaps can include:

- Stayed at home to raise children
- Medical Issue that kept you from working
- Family Illness including children
- Went back to school full time
- Moved to another place and had a difficult time finding work
- Incarceration (see next page)

Employers will notice if you have large gaps on your resume and if the question isn't answered, they could assume the worst. It is important to explain in the cover letter what occurred during this time.

This explanation does not need to take up a lot of space and you don't need to share specific details. One or two sentences will suffice. If you learned a new skill or increased your experience during that time share it.

Example:

I am excited to be applying to your company. I have spend the last 5 years caring for one of my children who was diagnosed with a disability. They are now in school and I am able to return to work. I have gained many caregiving skills during this time which line up with what your are currently looking for in this position.

Dealing with Gaps or Issues

INCARCERATION

If your gap is due to being incarcerated you do not have to address the issue until you have received an interview.

In 2018 Washington "banned the box" which means employers are prohibited from asking about convictions until the applicant has been deemed qualified.

How to Handle Resumes and Cover Letters for Reentry

Based on recommendations from "Washington Reentry Guide"

- If you were able to work while incarcerated you can put "State of Washington" as the employer on your resume.
- You do not have to reference your criminal history in your cover letter.
- Applications are prohibited from asking about criminal history on job applications.
- Once you have qualified for an interview employers can ask about recent criminal history (within the past 10 years).
- It is important that you prepare a statement for these questions and be honest with the employer.
- Further details on how to prepare a statement and character references are in the Background Issues Resource.



TEMPLATE

Your Name
Address
City, State Zip
xxx-xxx-xxxx
email@email.com

Full Date (Month Day, Year)

To Whom it May Concern or Hiring Manager's Name:

The first paragraph is where you introduce yourself, how you found the job opening and why you wish to apply. Typically, 2-3 sentences.

The second and third paragraphs are communicating to the employer how you are a good fit for the position. This could be by showing how you meet the qualifications and or talking about your passion for the job or organization.

Highlight anything else you want the employer to know about you. This could include your knowledge of the industry, knowledge about the values of the company or your vast experience.

The last paragraph is where you address any issues (gaps) and then make your ask. This could be letting them know you are excited about the position and look forward to hearing from them.

Sincerely,

[Real Signature if possible]

Your Name

EXAMPLE

Landon Suarez
123 Street
Vancouver, WA 98661
xxx-xxx-xxxx
email@email.com

May 5, 2020

Tim Botwin
Data Alliance
321 Street
Vancouver, WA 98663

Dear Tim,

I would welcome the chance to further discuss the Leadership Development/Call Supervisor position. My enthusiasm, analytical skills, organizational abilities, and creativity in solving problems would make a positive contribution to the Data Alliance management team. I am adept at maintaining excellent relationships with associates, peers, customers, and management. My accomplishments have included the following:

- My extensive work and background in the Financial Industry.
- Motivate and develop associates.
- Execute goals and objectives of the associates and company.
- Ensure compliance with all federal regulatory branches.
- Promote and develop stronger customer relationship and retention.

After reviewing my information, I hope you will agree that I am the kind of driven, accomplished candidate that you are looking for. Please contact me to arrange for a convenient meeting time so that I can elaborate on how my track record in various work environments can benefit your organization. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Landon Suarez

NOTES