

# Cover Letters

A cover letter can pave the way to an Interview. The purpose is to show how your background fits a particular job in the organization you are interested in.

## *Cover Letters Can*

- Show if you can communicate effectively
- Demonstrate you have done your research into a company
- Make it easier for the employer to form interview questions
- Be your first impression, highlighting your qualities can convince an employer to read your resume
- Better your chance of success- if you know the name of the hiring manager and have it on your cover letter, he/she is much more likely to receive it and read it

## *Cover Letters are your Chance to Impress*

- If you can get a referral from a person who has a personal connection to the employer, this is GREAT information to include in your cover letter
- Ever hear of the expression 'It's not what you know, it's who you know'... use this to your advantage

## *Basic Guidelines*

- Use block style with left hand justification
- Be consistent with your formatting; your name address and fonts should be the same throughout your cover letter, resume and references
- Incorporate your job objective into the letter, especially if you have not included it in your resume
- Be brief!
- Highlight how you can contribute to the organization you are applying to
- Proofread the letter for mistakes
- Remember to sign your letter

## *The cover letter should ideally have 3-4 paragraphs*

- Opening Paragraph
- Highlights about the company
- Body
- Closing paragraph

## *Paragraph One*

- Begin your letter with a strong statement. State why you are writing, how you learned of the job opening, and the name of the position you are seeking

## *Paragraph Two*

- This paragraph will make your cover letter stand out from other candidates
- Use this space to arouse curiosity in the employer
- Describe why you are interested in the position
- Specify your qualifications (education, skills, experience, attributes) as they relate to the needs of the employer
- Write about what you can do for the employer rather than what they can do for you

- Be sure to keep paragraphs short and go beyond what's highlighted in your resume

### *Things to Consider When Writing Your Second Paragraph*

- Carefully review the ad criteria
- What skills are they asking for in the ad?
- How do your skills match these?
- Does your resume reflect these skills?

With over 10 years administrative experience, I am a strong multi-tasker and thrive in a fast-paced work environment. My strong computer skills, typing speed of 65 wpm and excellent knowledge of Word, Excel, and Access would definitely be of value to your office.

### *Paragraph Three – The Close*

- Make a specific request for an interview and indicated to the employer when you'll be available and how you can be reached
- State if you will follow up with a phone call to arrange a convenient time to meet or speak on the phone
- Thank the employer for her or his time and consideration

### *Format Example*

**Your Name**

Return Address

City, Province Postal Code

Today's Date

Employer's Name (the person who does the hiring)

Their Position Title

Company Name

Street Address or Box Number

City, Province, Postal Code

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_: (make sure Mrs./Ms. and spelling of names is accurate)

Tell the reader that you are interested in this job and why. Let the reader know that you are familiar with the organization and its operations, but get right to the point. If appropriate, state how you heard about the job opportunity.

Explain why you are applying for this position or type of work. Point out any key experience (including volunteer or school-related) that qualifies you for this position. Keep your paragraphs short (avoid repeating exactly the same information that is on your resume).

Highlight (briefly and relevantly) any important work history. State that a resume or application is enclosed for more information. Offer to provide additional information, if needed.

Request an interview (politely) if appropriate, let the reader know you will be checking back with them to set up an appointment time. Thank them for their time.

Sincerely,

<sign here>

Your name (typed)

Enclosed resume (put this at the end of your letter if you have not already referred to your resume in the body of the letter)

Canada



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

WorkBC  
Employment Services Centre