

Cover Letters

In many cases, a cover letter is the first point of contact you have with potential employers. It's important to make sure yours is professional, dynamic and speaks directly to what the employer is seeking.

Content Guidelines

Paragraph 1

State your purpose, identifying the position you are applying for and how you learned about the opening. If applicable, mention the name of the person who referred you to the position.

Paragraph 2

Tell the employer why you are a strong candidate for this position. Highlight relevant **achievements, skills, and/or experience**. If the position posting includes specific skills they are seeking, mention that you have those skills and have perfected them in a business environment.

Paragraph 3

This paragraph can be included if there is additional information that adds strength to your qualifications and has not been mentioned on your resume, or needs to be described in more detail (for example, a special project you undertook in a previous position.)

Paragraph 4

The final paragraph should be **action-oriented**. State when and how you will contact the individual to arrange a mutually convenient time to interview. Employers will not always automatically contact you in response, but be sure to indicate how and when they can do so. Finally, thank the person for considering your candidacy.

Important Tips

- **Never** send out a resume without a cover letter.
- If possible, address your cover letter specifically to the person by **name and title** who will most likely be interviewing for the job you have in mind.
- Just as your resume, your cover letter should be tailored towards the **specific position** for which you are applying.
- The cover letter gives you the opportunity to present yourself as the **best candidate** for the position. It is your chance to capture the employer's attention and convince hiring managers that you are worthy of an interview.
- Highlight your **most attractive features** as a potential employee.
- **Be brief**. Avoid detailing your entire work history. Highlight one or two of your accomplishments or abilities that show you are an above-average candidate for the position. This increases your chances of being remembered.
- Avoid beginning sentences with the word "I."
- Taking time to **research the employer** is much more effective than sending out hundreds of form letters. Mention in the cover letter **why** you want to work for that particular company, to show them that you have taken the time to do your research.
- **Proofread** your cover letter, and have someone else do so. Typing and grammatical errors will most likely result in yours being thrown out.



Sample Correspondence:

"Please accept my resume in consideration for the Marketing Coordinator position with XYZ Company."

"My education and experience is directly aligned with the knowledge and skills you are seeking."

"As you will see in my resume, I have experience with budget analysis, developing financial models and many other functional areas within a financial environment."

"ABC Company has an excellent reputation for cutting edge research, and I believe my education and motivation to excel will make me an asset to the finance department."

"I look forward to speaking with you in the near future to learn more about the position."

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Rocky D. Bull
111 USF Drive ▪ Tampa, FL 33620
(813) 974-0000 ▪ rocky@usf.com

March 23, 2010

Recruiter X
ABC Company
111 Company Lane
Tampa, Florida 33620

Dear Ms. X:

Please accept my resume in consideration for the Financial Analyst position posted on CareerBuilder.com. I am eager to discuss this opportunity with you and feel I am a strong candidate for the position.

I have experience with budget analysis, developing financial models, and many other functional areas within a financial environment. My education – along with my internship experiences – have provided an opportunity for me to prove myself as a focused, hard-working, professional team member who “gets the job done.”

As my resume reflects, I recently earned a degree in finance from the University of South Florida, where research and hands-on learning are key elements of its business curriculum. Given ABC Company’s excellent reputation for cutting-edge research, I know my education and personal motivation to excel will make me an asset to your finance department.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with you and learn more about ABC Company and the Financial Analyst position. Should you have any questions, I can be reached at (813) 974-0000 or via email at rocky@usf.com.

Thank you in advance for considering me as a candidate for this position.

Sincerely,

Rocky D. Bull

enclosure