Creating an Effective Cover Letter

The Basics

- Use an easy-to-read font such as Times New Roman or Cambrai in size 11 or 12 font.
- Do not use colored text that is difficult to read, stick to black print.
- Use the same heading on your resume at the top of your cover letter.
- Mention the company's name in your letter to demonstrate that it was written for them specifically.
- Use concise sentences with common words.
- Keep your letter o one page and 2-3 body paragraphs.
- Focus on what you have to offer the company, not what you are looking to get out of the position.
- Do not restate all the information from your resume in your cover letter.
- Avoid vague descriptions. Instead of saying you are a "people person" give an example of when you provided exceptional customer service.
- A cover letter can help you explain gaps in employment, career changes or other special circumstances that may leave a hiring manager with questions after reviewing your resume.

Cover Letter Mistakes

- Do not include personal information like your age or marital status.
- Do not criticize part or present employers.
- Avoid being overly technical. Be sure your cover letter makes sense.

Sample of a Targeted Cover Letter

Heading (use the same heading from your resume)

Month Day, Year

Name of Organization
Street or PO Box Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Hiring Manager, (specify name, if available)

Opening paragraph: State why you are writing, the exact name of the position you are applying for, how you heard about the position, and very basic information about yourself. If you are a career changer or recent graduate this is a good spot to mention this.

Body paragraph 1: Explain why you are interested in the employer and how your skills match with what the employer is seeking. Demonstrate that you know enough about the employer or position to relate your background to the position. Mention specific qualifications which make you a good fit for the employers needs. Focus on what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.

Body paragraph 2 (optional): Here you can expand upon your experience or accomplishments that relate to the position you are applying for. You could mention the companies values and how you have demonstrated these values with specific experiences. Tell the employer why they should hire you, what sets you apart from the other candidates.

Closing paragraph: Indicate that you would like the opportunity to meet with them in an interview to learn more about the company and the position and to discuss your qualifications further. Thank the employer for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name