

# COVER LETTERS

January, 2014

## What is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is an essential part of your job application package and is just as important as your resume. While your resume provides a basic summary of your experience, a cover letter is your introduction to an employer; highlights particular skills; and explains why you are well-suited for a position. A good cover letter will help you attract the attention of employers.

## Internet Resources

[http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/ awsol/coverletteroutline.pdf](http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/awsol/coverletteroutline.pdf)

<http://career-advice.monster.ca/resumes-cover-letters/cover-letter-tips-how-not-to-write-a-cover-letter-canada/article.aspx>

<http://alis.alberta.ca/worksearch/resumes/cover-letter.html>

<http://www.workopolis.com/content/advice/article/3227-to-whom-it-may-concern-no-one-is-reading-your-cover-letter>

*"The resume focuses on you and the past. The cover letter focuses on the employer and the future. Tell the hiring professional what you can do to benefit the organization in the future."*

- Joyce Lain Kennedy

## TOP 10 TIPS ON WRITING COVER LETTERS

### 1. Customize

Customize your cover letter for each job you are applying for. Don't send out a generic cover letter with your resume. It's important to tailor the cover letter to the company and job position.

### 2. Salutation

The cover letter should be addressed to the name of the hiring manager (try and find the name of the hiring manager by calling the company or through researching the internet) instead of "Dear Sir/Madam or "To Whom it May Concern". If you are unable to find the name of the hiring manager, use "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Human Resources Professional". Don't assume a name is a male or female (i.e. Chris – can be either female or male, so use the appropriate salutation of Mr. or Ms.)

### 3. Appeal to the Employer's Needs

Research the company and show why your skills and competencies are right for the job. Stress how the employer will benefit from hiring your skills. Tell the company why you are interested in working for them. Say something positive about the company, or its product and/or services.

### 4. Highlight Your Skills, Experiences, and Accomplishments

Tailor your letter to the requirements of the job. State how your skills relate to this particular employer's needs. Use specific examples of situations where you were given tasks, show how you completed them successfully, and give proof your actions benefited the organization.

### 5. Make it Brief and to the Point

Include only two to four of the top reasons you should be considered for the job. Your letter shouldn't be more than 3-4 paragraphs and no more than one page typed.

### 6. Personalize

The cover letter should reflect your personality and enthusiasm. The reader is looking for a human being, a person who knows what he or she can offer and can express it well.

### 7. Don't overuse "I"

It's okay to refer to yourself, but not in every sentence. Remember to use "you" even more. Show the "you" to whom you are writing that you're more concerned with meeting his or her needs than meeting your own.

### 8. Don't Forget to Give the Employer a Way to Contact You.

It might sound simple, but never forget to include your phone number or email address or both.

### 9. End the letter with a Call to Action

The call to action statement is any phrase that invites the reader to act. (ex. "Please call me at 403-### #### to arrange a meeting to discuss how I can help your company ...")

### 10. Proofread

Don't make careless mistakes. Check, and re-check for any spelling, punctuation, grammar or typing errors. Sometimes it's tough to catch your own mistakes after you've been staring at the same text for a while. Try and get the help of a friend or family member to proofread it for you.

