

to make some changes, and it is less frustrating and less expensive if you print in small batches.

Résumé paper color should be carefully chosen. You should consider the types of employers who will receive your résumé and the types of positions for which you are applying. Use white or ivory paper for traditional or conservative employers or for higher-level positions.

Black ink on sharp, white paper can be harsh on the reader's eyes. Think about an ivory or cream paper that will provide less contrast and be easier to read. Pink, green, and blue tints should generally be avoided.

Many résumé writers buy packages of matching envelopes and cover sheet stationery that, although not absolutely necessary, help convey a professional impression.

If you'll be producing many cover letters at home, be sure you have high-quality printing equipment. Learn standard envelope formats for business, and retain a copy of every cover letter you send out. You can use the copies to take notes of any telephone conversations that may occur.

If attending a job fair, either carry a briefcase or place your résumé in a nicely covered legal-size pad holder.

The Cover Letter

The cover letter provides you with the opportunity to tailor your résumé by telling the prospective employer how you can be a benefit to the organization. It allows you to highlight aspects of your background that are not already discussed in your résumé and that might be especially relevant to the organization you are contacting or to the position you are seeking. Every résumé should have a cover letter enclosed when you send it out. Unlike the résumé, which may be mass-produced, a cover letter is most effective when it is individually prepared and focused on the particular requirements of the organization in question.

A good cover letter should supplement the résumé and motivate the reader to review the résumé. The format shown in Exhibit 2.3 (see page 34) is only a suggestion to help you decide what information to include in a cover letter.

Begin the cover letter with your street address six lines down from the top. Leave three to five lines between the date and the name of the person to whom you are addressing the cover letter. Make sure you leave one blank line between the salutation and the body of the letter and between paragraphs. After typing "Sincerely," leave four blank lines and type your name.

This should leave plenty of room for your signature. A sample cover letter is shown in Exhibit 2.4 on page 35.

The following guidelines will help you write good cover letters:

1. Be sure to type your letter neatly; ensure there are no misspellings.
2. Avoid unusual typefaces, such as script.
3. Address the letter to an individual, using the person's name and title. To obtain this information, call the company. If answering a blind newspaper advertisement, address the letter "To Whom It May Concern" or omit the salutation.
4. Be sure your cover letter directly indicates the position you are applying for and tells why you are qualified to fill it.
5. Send the original letter, not a photocopy, with your résumé. Keep a copy for your records.
6. Make your cover letter no more than one page.
7. Include a phone number where you can be reached.
8. Avoid trite language and have someone read the letter over to react to its tone, content, and mechanics.
9. For your own information, record the date you send out each letter and résumé.

Exhibit 2.3

COVER LETTER FORMAT

Your Street Address
 Your Town, State, Zip
 Phone Number
 Fax Number
 E-mail

Name _____
 Title _____
 Organization _____
 Address _____
 Year _____

First Paragraph. In this paragraph state the reason for the letter; name the specific position or type of work you are applying for; and indicate from which resource (career services office, website, newspaper, contact, employment service) you learned of this opening. The first paragraph can also be used to inquire about future openings.

Second Paragraph. Indicate why you are interested in this position, the company, or its products or services and what you can do for the employer. If you are a recent graduate, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate. Try not to repeat the same information found in the résumé.

Third Paragraph. Refer the reader to the enclosed résumé for more detailed information.

Fourth Paragraph. In this paragraph say what you will do to follow up on your letter. For example, state that you will call by a certain date to set up an interview or to find out if the company will be recruiting in your area. Finish by indicating your willingness to answer any questions the recipient may have. Be sure you have provided your phone number.

Sincerely,

 Type your name
 Enclosure

Exhibit 2.4
SAMPLE COVER LETTER

143 Random Way
 Shreveport, LA 71130
 (318) 555-5555
 jsmith@xxxx.com

November 29, 2007
 Kimberly Crane
 Director of Personnel
 ACME Distributors
 279 Main Street
 Shreveport, LA 71130

Dear Ms. Crane:

In May 2008, I will graduate from Louisiana State University with a bachelor of arts degree in French. I read of your sales opening on the *Times* website, and I am very interested in the possibilities it offers. I am writing to explore the opportunity for employment with your company.

The ad indicated that you were looking for enthusiastic individuals with exceptional communication skills. I believe that I possess those qualities. Through my job as a waitress at a busy diner, I have learned the importance of having high energy and maintaining a positive attitude toward customers. In addition to the various marketing classes in my academic program, I felt it important to enroll in some communication courses, such as human communication skills, interpersonal communication, and public speaking. These courses helped me to become comfortable in my interactions with other people, and they taught me how to communicate clearly. These characteristics will help me to represent ACME in a professional and enthusiastic manner.

As you will see by my enclosed résumé, I was an admissions representative for three years of college. This position provided me with sales experience in that campus tours involved a certain degree of persuasive presentation of the college and its features to prospective students.

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