Hints & Tips for Writing a Professional Cover Letter

Your cover letter should be written in response to a specific job opening. This means you will edit your letter each time you apply for a job, targeting the specific needs of the employer. The goal is to get your resume read – beyond the 60 second scan performed by the hiring manager’s assistant and/or by Human Resources – and generate a job interview. Most important, a successful letter demonstrates how your qualifications match the job requirements – in other words, why they should hire you!

- Communicate your interest, motivation, and strengths.
- One page only!!!
- Avoid clichés and meaningless or wordy expressions.
- Be sure to proofread for spelling and grammar.
- Use a simple, easy-to-read font.
- Use the same paper stock for both your cover letter and resume.
- Use standard margins (one-inch usually)

Organize your letter as follows:

- Seize Attention: In one, short, bold sentence tell them what why you are writing; example:
  ➔ Your opening for an Executive Assistant is of keen interest to me because of the close match between my professional background and the qualifications for your position.

- Stimulate Interest: Describe your most important qualification(s) as they relate to the position requirements; example:
  ➔ In brief, I offer over 12 years experience providing a wide range of administrative support to division heads and the CEO of a large, local company, backed by a Bachelor’s degree in business administration.

- Provide evidence of your experience and accomplishments that relate directly to the job, identifying your most relevant skills and experiences; example:
  ➔ The following summary demonstrates how my qualifications match the requirements for your Executive Assistant position:
    ▪ Responsible for budgets of up to 1.25 million; review and approve expenses.
    ▪ Manage calendars for multiple executives; screen requests and set appointments.
    ▪ Handle logistics for large meetings involving multi-day events.
    ▪ Prepare correspondence including legal documents and contracts.
    ▪ Supervise support staff.

- Convince the employer that you have the personal qualifications and motivation to perform well in the position; example:
  ➔ My experience and education are backed by superior skills in customer service and use of many different computer applications (PCs and Mac), as well as a dedication to . . .

- Wrap It Up: Indicate availability and contact information; example:
  ➔ A detailed resume and professional references are enclosed. Please call me at your earliest opportunity. I can be reached at (509) xxx-xxxx at any time, or alternatively via email at jdoe@gmail.com. I look forward to discussing how my background and experience fit your needs. Thank you for your time and consideration.