

COVER LETTERS

Cover letters can be a great way to differentiate you as an applicant. Keep in mind that a well-written letter will only help your application. However, a poorly written one can be detrimental. Since there is no one way to write a letter that will work for every situation, you should give as much thought and time to your letter writing as you do your other search activities. These tips should help get you started on the right track.

WHAT TO DO AND NOT TO DO

Don't write a generic impersonal letter.

These simply don't work. Tailor your letter to the organization and the position for which you are applying. Doing so will demonstrate that you are informed, motivated and a good fit.

Do connect your background to the job description.

Pay attention to the qualities that are being sought in the job description. Brainstorm before you write the letter, make a list of the stated needs from the position description and identify your key qualifications.

Don't be self-centered.

Write your letter from a work/employer-centered perspective. This is your chance to show that you can add value and cause the employer to want to learn more about you.

Do include your relevant accomplishments.

Include specific examples. Don't just state that you can use Microsoft Excel. Give a detailed example that shows how you've used it in the past. You can draw examples from class work, volunteer activities, internships, athletic or student organization participation. You need to lay all pertinent information out so the hiring manager can easily see your experience and qualities are a fit for the employer's needs. Bulleting your accomplishments in your cover letter is an option.

Don't forget to customize.

If you are applying to a number of similar positions, you may be tweaking the same cover letter and using it for multiple openings. Don't forget to update the company, job and contact name.

Do proofread.

You want to present the best image possible and typos and grammatical errors create a poor impression. Have your letter thoroughly proofread by someone you trust or Career Services.

Don't repeat your resume.

Tell a more detailed story using the STAR method that proves the skills and qualifications that are briefly outlined in your resume. Employers often request a cover letter to evaluate your written communication skills, so keep sentence structure clear and concise. You want to build a case that you are the best fit.

Do send a thank-you letter.

This can be one of the most effective tools in a search. It is used to express appreciation and strengthen your candidacy. A good rule of thumb is that everyone who helps you in any way gets a thank-you letter. It's a great way to follow-up after an interview. If you forgot to discuss a relevant accomplishment, then include it in your letter.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

- Avoid generic letters or templates.
- Use business letter format.
- Keep it to one page.
- Use common fonts, size 10.5 to 12, such as:
Arial, Calibri, Verdana.

COVER LETTERS

YOUR COVER LETTER

This example provides an outline for how to format your cover letter and guides you in the creation of specific paragraphs.

Your cover letter must reflect your own personal writing style and connect your background to the employer's needs.

Opening paragraph

Middle paragraph(s)

Last paragraph

.150 University Blvd.
Morehead, KY 40351

December 2, 2018

Ms. Cindy Name
XYZ Company Address
123 Maple Avenue
Morehead, KY 40351

Dear Ms. Recruiter:

Your recent posting on Morehead State University's Eagle CareerNet caught my attention as my previous experiences and training are a match for the requirements of the position. I am submitting my resume for consideration for the Inside Sales position.

I have extensive experience interacting with people over the phone as a Student Caller in the Development Office. My verbal communication skills were improved by working on the phone for four hours each evening as well as the sales training that I received. Raising \$5,000 for the university in one evening, I was recognized as Student Caller of the Year. I can bring this same energy and influence to selling your products to clients.

The job description indicated that you are looking for a self-starter that can multi-task and work in a fast-paced environment. I gained those skills working as a cashier at Burger Place. The restaurant where I worked was the busiest in the eastern region so I never had a down moment. I implemented a new close down procedure that decreased the clean-up time for staff and smoothly transitioned to the next shift. Furthermore, my supervisor stated on my evaluation that I am dependable and prompt.

I look forward to discussing my qualifications for and interest in the Inside Sales position. Your mission to provide leading-edge systems technologies is also a passion of mine. I am excited at the prospect of growing your sales in the eastern KY region. I can be reached at 606-783-2233 to set up an interview. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joe Application

Joe Application

Your address here

Today's date

Address to a specific person.
If not possible, try Hiring Manager.

Explain why you are writing.
Include the position that you are applying for and how your heard about it.

Explain why they should hire you. Detail how your skills match the position with specific examples.

Show your knowledge of the company.

Include how you can be reached.

REFERENCE PAGE

IDENTIFY REFERENCES.

Identify at least three people who can speak about your work ethic, skills and dependability. Consider faculty, coaches, advisors and supervisors. If possible, obtain references from a variety of places, roles or experiences. If the reference has not seen you in a work or academic setting, they may not be a good choice.

GET PERMISSION.

Ask each reference if he/she will serve as a *positive* reference for you.

GATHER CORRECT INFORMATION.

Confirm contact information for each reference, including email address and phone number.

INFORM YOUR REFERENCES.

Provide your references with periodic updates. If you have an interview scheduled, inform your reference of the interview, provide them with the position description and your current resume. This information will help your reference be prepared to articulate why you are a good fit.

FOLLOW UP.

Inform your references when you secure a position and send a thank-you note to acknowledge the time they have spent to help you.

Sally S. Smith
100 Soaring Eagle Lane
Morehead, KY 40351
(606) 555-5555
sally_smith@email.com

REFERENCES

Name of Reference, Title
Department/Division
Company/Organization
Street Address
City, State Zip
Phone
E-mail
(Short statement explaining their relationship to you - if needed)

John J. Jones, Director
Louisville Family Therapy
521 Taylor Blvd.
Louisville, KY 40505
859.555.6565
john.jones@portlandco.com
(Formerly with Lexington Marriage and Family Therapy, Internship Supervisor)

Sally Smithers, Teacher
St. Agatha's Montessori School
3838 Trent Blvd.
Louisville, KY 40502
859.555.9897
ssmithers@ymail.com