

# How to write a glowing cover letter

By James North

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Here we look at a resume cover letter. This is an extract from RESUMES THAT GET INTERVIEWS!

When you are applying for a job, an effective resume cover letter is an essential part of your application. A good resume cover letter will take you a long way towards an interview, but a poor (or even no) resume cover letter will certainly kill your application.

The Most Desired Response or "MDR" of your resume cover letter is to get your resume read. That's all. Everything you have on your resume cover letter should have the MDR in mind. If you cannot answer positively to 'why this or that?' sentence is on your resume cover letter...then remove it.

You have less than 10-seconds to secure the MDR. Every sentence and every word of each sentence must be relevant...everything must be working towards the MDR.

Ah a question...'surely the MDR of a resume covering letter is to get the interview?'

No. That's asking too much of a resume cover letter. Getting the interview is the MDR of your resume. The information on a resume will clinch the interview, while the information you share on a resume cover letter should pre- sell your resume - not a re-jigging of the same information. Your resume covering letter should complement your resume.

How important is a resume cover letter? Very!

While a resume is thought of as more 'important', there is little doubt that an effective resume covering letter will pre-sell your resume almost into an interview.

Your resume cover letter is your chance to tell a potential employer how your skills will benefit the company. It is a golden opportunity to sell yourself as the best candidate for the job. Your resume cover letter is about what you can offer to the prospective employer in terms of enthusiasm, skills and experience. Don't simply repeat the details of your resume, such as Professional Career, Education, or your Resume Objectives on your resume cover letter.

Here Are The Components of a resume cover letter:

Greeting:-

Address the letter to a name: "Dear Mr. Smith," If you don't have the information, call the company and find it out - including the correct spelling. If you can't obtain the information by calling the company, use a generic title: "Dear IT Manager"

The Opening Paragraph:-

The opening paragraph should let the reader know why you are writing to them. Make it clear which job you are applying for and where you saw the advertisement. For speculative letters outline what kind of work you are looking for.

Your first sentence is most important. Use it to give the reader context for the rest of your letter. For example, it can be very effective to simply say: "I'm applying for the position of [insert job title] as advertised on [insert date in [insert publication]]."

If you were referred by someone in the company then name drop (as long as you are not breaking any confidence).

The Pre-sell Paragraph:-

Why should the reader look at your resume? Paragraph two needs to tell the employer, in more detail, why you are suited to the job and what skills you have got to offer. Why would the reader benefit from looking at your resume?

You need to flag up two or three of your relevant points and give some concrete information on the skills and experience you have. Read the Job Description and Person Spec. and match your strengths to them so as to convey your skills as benefits.

The resume cover letter also gives you a chance to explain skills that you might not be able to get across in the resume, such as maturity, calmness or interpersonal skills. It is vital though that you back up your claims in your resume cover letter with evidence on your resume.

Be specific about how your skills and experience qualify you for the job in question. However, don't simply repeat your resume.

Explain what you can bring to the company?

Repeat words and phrases the employer used in the Job Description.

For increased effectiveness bullet points your strengths.

The "I Did Some "Research"

Describe how your background can help you meet current company objectives. You should insert something you read about the company, signalling that you did your research.

The key to this paragraph is to focus on the needs of the employer. A position has been created due to an "internal company problem", which requires someone to be taken on board. Your resume cover letter and resume must shout..."here is the solution to your problem."

The Closing Paragraph:-

State when and how you will follow up on your letter; usually with a phone call.

If you're asked to state your salary requirement, do some research beforehand (you could call local recruitment agencies and canvass their opinions) and give a broad range or write "negotiable."

Never write an exact figure and never bring up salary issue unless you are asked to do so (usually after you have a job offer).

If you have dates when you are available for interview give them here. "I will be in the local area on Tuesday and Wednesday next week and I am available for interview on either day. However, if these days are not suitable I am flexible in terms of arranging an interview."

Thank the employer for reviewing your application.

Signing Off:-

If you have addressed the letter to a named person (which is by far and away the best thing to do), you should end the letter with "Yours sincerely", if you wrote "Dear IT Manager", it should end with "Yours faithfully."

Sign your letter only in black or blue ink and on the next line return print your name.

Under your name give a contact number and email address for the reader to contact you. Make sure you have regular access to the number or email address.

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"If you really want something in life, you have to work for it. Now quiet! They're about to announce the lottery numbers." - Homer J. Simpson

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