

**The job of the cover letter is to, first, respond to the job requirements by matching your experience and capabilities to what they're asking, and, second, by adding anything that isn't on your resume that you think may be useful to help them make up their mind and invite you in for an interview.**

A **ONE PAGE** cover letter should always accompany your resume and address the following three points:

**Paragraph 1.** Introduce yourself and say where you saw their advertisement.

**Paragraph 2.** Demonstrate how you are qualified for the advertised job.

**Paragraph 3.** Ask for an interview to discuss your qualifications.

Use complete title, full address and correct spelling. Address the letter to the person who has the power to hire you.

Do not over use the pronoun "I". "Sell Yourself." Organize the contents of these paragraphs to suit your needs, placing emphasis on your most pertinent attributes and skills. If you meet all of the stated requirements, spell this out in your letter. Be assertive and ask for an interview. Or state that you will be in touch and then remember to follow up.

**SIGN YOUR LETTER!!**

**Example:**

John Kelly  
942 Court Street, North  
Thunder Bay, Ontario  
P7A 4W2

**(your contact)**

December 22, 2010

Jim Smith  
Lakehead University  
955 Oliver Road  
Thunder Bay, Ontario  
P7B 5E1

**(their contact)**

Attention Mr. Smith: (If you are not able to get the name, use Attention Hiring Manager)

**OPENING PARAGRAPH**

Be sure to include: The position you are applying for and the competition number if given. Where you saw the ad (give name and date of publication) If someone who knows the employer referred you, give the name of that person and your interest in the position. It's also smart to place your **availability** here, especially if you are an upcoming grad.

**MIDDLE**

Why: PARAGRAPH

How you are suited for the job.

How you match the specific job requirements listed in the ad: (one must cross reference everything the employer is looking for and explain **how** you are qualified or can do the job expectation.)

(related experience, training, qualifications, skills background and attributes. )

**CLOSING PARAGRAPH**

State your interest in meeting with the employer for an **interview** and arrange for further contact. Make it easy for the person to contact you! List **one or two phone numbers and email** where you can be reached and/or a message can be left.

Yours truly,

*John Kelly* (You can also scan your signature and save it as jpg file. This looks professional! )

John Kelly  
Enclosed

## Seven Secrets to a Great Cover Letter

Aside from a resume, your cover letter is the most important job searching tool you must develop. A cover letter introduces you to potential employers and gives you the opportunity to draw the reader's attention to particular skills and experiences. Done right, a cover letter can move your resume to the top of the pile. If you are not sure how to make your cover letter stand out, here are seven secrets that will get you started in the right direction.

### **1. Make it personal.**

Try not to address a cover letter to a generic being, such as "hiring manager." While finding the correct addressee might take a little work, finding that person is well worth the effort. Call the company and ask to whom to send your resume. If the company will not give you a name, try to find out through other means, such as current employees or corporate Web site. Putting a real name on your letter will make it look more like an important piece of correspondence and less like junk mail.

### **2. Get to the point.**

Your cover letter should never be more than one page, and once you include your return address and the company address, you do not have much space. That is why you need to let the reader know why you are writing immediately. If you are responding to an ad for an open position, mention that ad and position in the first line or two. If you have been referred by another individual, let the reader know that right up front.

### **3. Show off your company knowledge.**

One way to get a hiring manager's attention is by demonstrating that you have done your homework. Before you start writing your letter, research the company to learn about recent news and events, its financial status or any mergers or acquisitions. You can then incorporate this knowledge into your letter, particularly in the first paragraph. For example, you might start by mentioning a recent story you read about the company's success expanding into an international market, and express your interest in utilizing your past experience in international business relations to help further the company's position overseas.

### **4. Answer their prayers.**

You can and should use your letter to give the company exactly what it is looking for. This means paying attention to job postings and descriptions and advising that you have the desired skills and qualifications. If the company has indicated it is seeking candidates with budget management experience, make sure you talk specifically about your experience, such as "I have experience in managing budgets of approximately \$5 million and consistently achieving departmental financial goals." Use your cover letter to point out exactly why you are a good fit. The best way to do this is by making it easy for the reader to come to the same conclusion.

### **5. Show, don't just tell.**

One mistake many people make on cover letters is saying they have certain qualifications without including any evidence to back up their claims. Are you positioning yourself as an individual with strong customer service skills? Include specific examples that speak to those skills. This may mean pulling out one or two accomplishments throughout your career and writing about them in detail in the second or third paragraph.

### **6. Promise to take action.**

A cover letter is like any other aspect of job hunting – the squeaky wheel always gets the oil. Wrap up your cover letter with a promise to contact the company, and then back up your statement with action. Your cover letter is too important to end by just saying "I look forward to hearing from you." Take the initiative by telling the reader, "I will follow up with you in the next week to schedule a convenient time for us to meet."

### **7. Read and read again.**

Are you tired of working on your cover letter? Do you feel like you have read it 100 times already? It's always a good idea to read it just a couple more times to ensure that you do not have any typos, spelling or grammatical errors. Once you have exhausted yourself in the editing process, give the letter to a friend or family member to read. Sometimes, a fresh set of eyes can pick up on things that have been missed for ages.