The purpose of a cover letter is to introduce yourself to a prospective employer. A well-crafted document allows you to explain why you are interested in the position and highlights how your skills and background specifically match the employer’s needs. This letter should be individualized for each position you are applying for and can play an important role in being invited for an interview. Cover letters are not required when attending a job fair and may be optional when posting your resume at on-line job sites.

COVER LETTER DESIGN

Introduction: The first paragraph lets the employer know why you are writing. Identify the position you are applying for and how you heard of the opening. You may also want to outline why you are interested in this position or company.

Body: This is typically one to two paragraphs in length and outlines how your skills and background meet the employer’s needs. Be specific and give examples.

Close: The final paragraph allows you to wrap up your thoughts and thank the employer for their consideration. Close on a positive note.

TIPS

- Follow any guidelines or instructions that the employer notes in their job posting.
- Keep a professional tone and focus. Follow standard business writing guidelines.
- Always type your cover letter and use the same type of paper as your resume.
- Keep the length to one or two pages.
- Address your letter to a specific person whenever possible. When the contact name is not available, direct the letter to “Director of Human Resources”, “Recruiting Manager”, or “Search Committee”.
- Be positive and confident. Demonstrate your interest and enthusiasm.
- Vary your wording and sentence structure.
- Always proof your cover letter for grammatical or spelling errors.
- It can be helpful to include your telephone number and e-mail in your cover letter. Make a notation if you will be using a cell phone.
- Avoid offensive e-mail addresses or voice mail greetings. Remember, these can be one of the first impressions you make on a potential employers.

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