

# POSITIVE TIPS FOR THE JOB MARKET

## **CLEVER COVER LETTERS:**

### **HOW TO PERSUADE READERS TO SEE WHAT'S UNDER THE COVER...**

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Many people spend hours perfecting their resumes and give little or no thought to their cover letter. Without a clever and creative cover letter, how will you let the employer know who you really are? If the hiring manager receives 75 resumes for one advertised position, how will your resume stand out? To **WOW** a prospective employer, you need to properly introduce yourself with an upbeat, professional and memorable cover letter. Since your resume is a formal document, it shouldn't convey your personality; however, your cover letter, if it is well thought out, will!

The purpose of the cover letter is to present your intentions, qualifications and availability in a concise format. First, you need to do some homework. Research the company and the position; read through the company website, examine brochures and other promotional materials, and speak with people that may be helpful. You're looking for information about the company's mission, their past performance as well as their goals and company culture. After your research is complete, you are ready to match your experience and qualifications to the employer's needs and standards.

At this point, you are ready to draft the cover letter. Choose a standard business-letter format (e.g. block style) and, if possible, address it to a specific person. If you do not know who is in charge of hiring, avoid overused salutations such as "To Whom It May Concern" and address the letter to the "Hiring Manager" or the "Hiring Committee".

Next, the **opening paragraph** should clearly state the position you're applying for and how you found out about it. Also, in your opening, make sure you include an upbeat punch line that will automatically grab the reader's interest- this often takes some time and creativity. The next paragraph is the **body** of the cover letter- your sales pitch. Demonstrate, with specific examples, how your qualifications, drive and track record will benefit the employer. Brag a little! Use solid examples to explain how your performance benefited former employers. However, a few notes of caution: make sure that the text doesn't bore the reader- keep it simple, short and upbeat! Don't over-use "I" and "my". Remember that sarcasm and life stories are frowned upon. Don't repeat your resume word for word. And, finally, **PROOF READ** before sending!

The **closing paragraph** is your chance to make a call for action. Express your strong interest in an interview or, if the employer doesn't mind phone calls, that you will follow-up to confirm the receipt of your application. **End** with a complimentary and professional close (e.g. "Best Regards") and sign your name.

Although a customized cover letter may take a significant amount of time, it is well worth the effort. Your clever cover letter will make you stand out from all the generic applications and will hopefully persuade the employer to review your resume and schedule an interview. Good Luck!

**For more information please contact  
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