

Cover Letters

45?

A cover letter is the letter that introduces you to your potential employer. It entices the reader to examine your resume to really see if you are the person for the job.

There Are 11 Basic Components To A Good Cover Letter

① Every cover letter needs to have your address on it, either in a letterhead or typed at the top as shown...give it the professional look you want!

② The date you are writing is the next important part of the letter. Keep a copy of the letter so you can know when your first contact was made.

③ Always type the address just as it appears in the advertisement or job posting.

④ This is called the "salutation." Every letter should have one...it's your way of saying "hello." If you don't know a name, use the salutation shown.

⑤ The first paragraph is the statement of your purpose of writing...you identify the job you are applying for and tell them you are interested and qualified.

⑥ This is the "meat and potatoes" of your letter. This is where you *toot your own horn!* Here is where you highlight your qualifications and personal attributes that match those requested in the advertisement. This is not the place to be shy...tell them how good you really are!!! Of course, honesty is a necessity, but don't under-sell yourself!

① 45 Ace Drive
Your Town, NC 99999
② Today's Date

Box 727 ③
c/o Times Herald
Alltown, NC 99999

Dear Sir or Madam: ④

⑤ I am writing regarding your advertisement in the Sunday edition of the *Times Herald*. I believe that I am qualified for the personnel assistant position. My resume is enclosed for your review.

⑥ I have worked for two years as an administrative assistant in the human resources department of a large medical center. In this job, I was responsible for a weekly payroll for 24 people, maintained bank accounts and conducted training for new employees.

① I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you.

② I can be reached by phone at 555-4545 during the evening. If you do need to contact me during the day, I can be reached at work, with discretion please, at 555-1212.

③ Sincerely,

④ Mary Smith Doe

Enclosure: Resume ⑤

① The next to last paragraph of your letter is where you try to "set the hook"...don't let 'em get away! If you are feeling aggressive (which you should be!)...you could state here that you will be calling next week to see if an interview can be arranged. NOTE: If you do this, be sure you do call exactly when you say you will or you will lose your credibility right off the bat! If you don't feel comfortable with the aggressive stance, use this paragraph to tell them you would certainly welcome an opportunity for an interview and hope to hear from them!

② Always include your telephone number. If possible, include both a day time and an evening number.

③ This is the close of the letter. Always use one. If you prefer a closing with more than one word (Very truly yours or Sincerely yours), be sure you capitalize only the first word and always use an ending comma for proper punctuation.

④ Type your name here. There are always four spaces between the close and your signature line. This means you hit return (enter) four times after the comma in the closing. Make sure you actually sign it in this area.

⑤ Be sure that you note on the letter that your resume is enclosed and then, for heaven's sake...don't forget to enclose it! Talk about starting off on the wrong foot!!!

Review the JobShop Form, *Sample Cover Letters*

Setting the Stage...

The cover letter is your passport to a possible job interview. Do not minimize its importance. Approach your letter with seriousness. It is as important as your resume. You want the reader to be impressed with your cover letter. You want the reader to want to talk to you. There are whole books available in libraries and stores on cover letter formats.

Obtaining a Name...

Do some detective work. Locate the phone number of the organization to which you are applying. Call and politely ask the person who answers the phone who is responsible for hiring the position that is available. Make sure you obtain the exact spelling of the person's name and verify it. Also, ask for the exact title of the person since titles vary from organization to organization.

Word Choices

How you word your letter is very important:

Don't just say...

I ran a cash register.

I babysat.

I worked as a waitress.

I was a night manager at a convenience store.

I answered the phone.

I can type.

I fixed cars.

I was a receptionist.

When you can say this!

I operated a cash register and was responsible for balancing the cash drawer at the end of each shift.

I was responsible for the daily care of two children. This included preparing nutritious meals, planning educational activities for them and providing a safe and enjoyable atmosphere.

I have experience hosting, as well as waiting tables. I am quick with my side work and have over a 30% rate of tipping.

As night manager at the convenience store, I was responsible for the total operation of the store including cash register operation, cash balancing, restocking, maintaining a neat and clean environment, dealing with vendors and ensuring friendly and prompt service to the customers.

I handled multiple phone lines, routed calls, and took messages.

I have experience typing correspondence, reports and other documents from copy, as well as from a dictation machine.

I have experience trouble-shooting and repairing both domestic and foreign autos.

I handled multiple phone lines, transferred calls, took messages and made appointments. In addition, I received visitors, directed inquiries and ensured a smooth flow of office traffic.

Matching your qualifications to the job....

Are you qualified for the job? Employers often list the qualifications of the perfect person, hoping to find someone who comes close. If you don't have every qualification listed, don't scratch it off. What you want to do is help the reader see that you are very close to that perfect person.

- Read the advertisement closely.
- Write down the qualifications listed by the employer on one side of a paper.
- On the other side, write down your qualifications that closely match those requested.
- Use these items in your letter.

Qualifications:

3 years experience in an office setting.

Word processing experience.

Ability to handle changing priorities.

Qualifications I Possess:

I have 5 years of office experience.

I have knowledge of both *WordPerfect* and *Word*.

I handle pressure well, can prioritize and am detail-oriented.

Chronological and Skills Resumes

There are two basic types of resumes: Chronological and Skills (sometimes called Functional). Review the JobShop Brief, Resume Writing Made Simple and the JobShop Form, Sample Chronological Resumes.

Sample Chronological Resume

- ① →
- ② →
- ③ →
- ④ →
- ⑤ →
- ⑥ →

Joseph H. King	
1312 Monroe Street, Any Town, NC 99999	(999)756-9023 jhk@internet.net
<u>Job Objective</u>	
To obtain a position in sales utilizing my customer service skills and excellent communications and mathematical abilities.	
<u>Employment Experience</u>	
1992 - present	Salesman Medical Markets, Inc. Your Town, IL 99999
Duties:	Inside and outside sales, cold marketing calls, tracking customers orders and merchandising.
1980 - 1992	Sales Assistant K and O Used Auto Sales MyTown, MA 99999
Duties:	Assisted sales staff with stocking, customer service and inventory.
<u>Education and Training</u>	
1992	B.S. in Marketing/North Carolina State University
1989	A.A.S. in Business Administration MyTown Community College, NC
<u>Skills</u>	
Customer Service Sales Database	Accounting Public Speaking

1. **Name** - Use formal name; no nicknames; example, use Joseph H. King, not Joe King. Type your name in a larger font than anything else on the Resume. After all, that is what you want people to notice and remember: your name. Using a horizontal graph line under your name like the one in the example makes a nice appearance.
2. **Address/Telephone Number** - You should always use your complete, un-abbreviated address, including zip code. Use a telephone number that will be answered at all times - preferably your own, or that of a friend who will take messages for you. Always include the area code. You may include your Internet e-mail address.
3. **Job Objective/Position Desired** - Whether you call it a job objective, position desired, job desired, career objective, etc., this should be a brief, clear statement targeting the type of position you want (rather than just one specific job). This statement should include the skills that enable you to perform the desired job.
4. **Experience/Work Experience** - List most recent job first and then go backward. If work experience is slim, include any unpaid/volunteer experience. Cover gaps in experience with school/home, or whatever you were doing during this time period, rather than leaving it blank. Include dates of employment, job title, company name and location and description of duties performed. Use action words whenever possible to make a positive statement.
5. **Education and Training** - If your education and training are more relevant to the job than your work experience, put this category first; otherwise put it after experience. Include any education and training that is relevant to the job.
6. **Special Skills/Abilities** - You can use this category to cover any other skills and abilities that you want an employer to know. Some examples are: good interpersonal/communication skills, attention to detail, require little or no supervision, etc.

Sample Skills Resume

① →

② →

③ →

④ →

⑤ →

⑥ →

⑦ →

Monica L. Smith

3344 Crown Avenue, MyTown, MO 99999 (999)825-3186

mosmith@Internet.net

Position Desired

A challenging position as an Administrative Assistant using my exceptional secretarial, organizational and communications skills.

Professional Skills

Organizational: Extremely well-organized work habits, detail oriented, decision-making and problem-solving skills.

Communications: Excellent oral and written communications skills in dealing with customers, staff and management.

Computer-Related: WordPerfect 6.0, Quattro Pro, DOS, Windows and Internet Programs. 50 WPM typing, operation of switchboard and fax machine, clerical skills including data entry and filing.

Work History

1995 - Present Secretary Senior
Park Employment Agency, OurTown, OK

1993 - 1995 Receptionist
Pikesville Furniture, YourTown, MO

1985 - 1993 Professional Homemaker and Mother

1984 - 1985 Switchboard Operator
Buddy's Used Cars, Newton, SC

Education

A.A.S. Degree in Office Systems Technology
OurTown Community College, OurTown, OK - 1997

Graduate of Newton High School, Newton, SC

Organizational Memberships

Oklahoma Secretarial Group
National Association of Office Workers

1. **Name** - Use formal name. Do not use nicknames. For example use Monica L. Smith, not Mo Smith. Type your name in a larger font than anything else on the Resume. After all, that is what you want people to notice and remember: your name. Using a horizontal graph line under your name like the one in the example makes a nice appearance.

2. **Address/Telephone Number** - You should always use your complete, un-abbreviated address, including zip code. Use a telephone number that will be answered at all times - preferably your own, or that of a friend who will take messages for you. Always include the area code.

3. **Job Objective/Position Desired** - Whether you call it a job objective, position desired, job desired, career objective, etc., this should be a brief, clear statement targeting the type of position you want (rather than just one specific job). This statement should include the skills that enable you to perform the desired job.

4. **Highlights/Qualifications/Professional Skills** - Group all of your relevant skills and abilities into three or four categories sorted by skill area. Try to list these skills and abilities in order of relevance to the position desired.

5. **Work History** - A brief history of your work experience including only dates of employment, job title, company name and location. Try to cover gaps in work history with something positive that you were doing during that time.

6. **Education** - Include any relevant education. This is usually listed after work history, but if education is more relevant to position desired, list education first on Resume, followed by work history.

7. **Organizational/Professional Memberships** - List any memberships or positions held with career-related organizations.

ACTION VERBS FOR COVER LETTERS & RESUMES

Leadership & Management

administered	attained	conducted	contracted	controlled
coordinated	directed	employed	enacted	exceeded
executed	expanded	grouped	guided	headed
hired	implemented	incorporated	initiated	instituted
maintained	managed	marketed	monitored	motivated
obtained	organized	performed	produced	reduced
repositioned	retained	revised	strengthened	supervised
trimmed	turned around	undertook	was responsible	

Organization & Implementation

advised	analyzed	arranged	budgeted	catalogued
collaborated	consulted	compared	compiled	completed
computed	decreased	distributed	enlarged	examined
expanded	facilitated	generated	improvised	increased
indexed	leveraged	redesigned	reorganized	restructured
reviewed	revised	scheduled	sponsored	strengthened
synthesized	systematized	verified		

Promotion & Sales

convinced	generated	improved	increased	influenced
launched	marketed	persuaded	promoted	recommended
represented	secured	sold	targeted	accounted for

Research & Development

analyzed	automated	classified	designed	determined
developed	differentiated	equated	experimented	invented
investigated	related	researched	searched	solved
structured	synthesized	theorized		

Problem-Solving

accomplished	awarded	balanced	closed	corrected
determined	diverted	eliminated	evaluated	handled
identified	improved	investigated	mediated	negotiated
pioneered	proposed	recruited	resolved	satisfied
sorted	strengthened	surpassed	assured	

Interpersonal Communications

counseled	demonstrated	disseminated	edited	facilitated
instructed	interviewed	moderated	participated	prepared
presented	presided	served as	wrote	approved

Initiative & Creativity

arranged	conceived	created	designed	developed
devised	enabled	enhanced	formulated	initiated
invented	innovated	originated	packaged	prepared
produced	refined	reshaped	resolved	solved
structured				

Management Verbs

administered	analyzed	assigned	attained	chaired
consolidated	contracted	coordinated	delegated	developed
directed	evaluated	executed	improved	increased
organized	oversaw	planned	prioritized	produced
recommended	reviewed	scheduled	strengthened	supervised

Communication Verbs

addressed	arbitrated	arranged	authored	collaborated
convinced	corresponded	developed	directed	drafted
edited	enlisted	formulated	influenced	interpreted
lectured	mediated	moderated	negotiated	persuaded
promoted	publicized	reconciled	recruited	spoke
translated	wrote			

Research Verbs

clarified	collected	diagnosed	evaluated	examined
extracted	identified	inspected	interpreted	interviewed
investigated	organized	reviewed	summarized	surveyed
systematized				

Technical Verbs

assembled	built	calculated	computed	designed
devised	engineered	fabricated	maintained	operated
overhauled	programmed	remodeled	repaired	solved
upgraded				

Teaching Verbs

adapted	advised	clarified	coached	communicated
coordinated	demystified	developed	enabled	encouraged
evaluated	explained	facilitated	guided	informed
instructed	persuaded	set goals	stimulated	trained

Management Verbs

administered	allocated	analyzed	appraised	audited
balanced	budgeted	calculated	computed	developed
forecasted	managed	marketed	planned	projected
researched				

Creative Verbs

acted	conceptualized	created	customized	designed
developed	directed	established	fashioned	founded
illustrated	initiated	instituted	integrated	introduced
invented	originated	performed	planned	revitalized
shaped				

Helping Verbs

advocated	assessed	assisted	clarified	coached
counseled	demonstrated	diagnosed	educated	expedited
facilitated	familiarized	guided	motivated	referred
rehabilitated	represented			

Clerical or Detail Verbs

approved	arranged	catalogued	classified	collected
compiled	dispatched	executed	generated	implemented
inspected	monitored	operated	organized	prepared
processed	purchased	recorded	retrieved	screened
specified	systematized	tabulated	validated	

Accomplishment Verbs

achieved	expanded	improved	pioneered	reduced (losses)
resolved (problems)	restored	spearheaded	transformed	