

Cover Letters

Here are some tips on when to send a cover letter.

- *If the job announcement asks* for a cover letter (usually found at the bottom of a job posting). In this case, follow the requirements exactly.
- If a large part of the *job entails communication*, a cover letter provides an opportunity to demonstrate your written communication skills.
- If you are making a *career change*, a cover letter gives you a chance to tell your story and mention transferable skills
- If you have a *large gap in employment*, a cover letter allows for a brief explanation and an opportunity to highlight ready-to-work skill sets.
- If you are applying because *you have a referral* from someone in the company, then name drop and share why that person thinks you will be a good fit for the company.
- Applications may have a text box for “cover letter” type explanation. In this case, keep what you write to 150 words or less. You should include a customized summary statement of qualifications + why you want to work for the company (cultural fit).

If you’re sending a cover letter

Do’s:

- Know your audience and speak to them
 - why you want to work for them
 - why they should want to hire you
 - What have you done that matches the position
- Keep it brief

Don’ts:

- Just repeat your resume
- Make it generic (could apply to any position or company)
- Have grammatical errors or typos

The sections of a brief cover letter might include:

1. Introduction - State the specific job, why you are interested, and who referred you (if applicable).
2. Body - Outline who you are and what you have to offer the employer. Customize to the job description.
3. Conclusion - Re-emphasize your interest and willingness to meet.

Formal Cover Letter Format:

Date
Your Name
Your city, state, ZIP code
Your email address

Hiring manager's name
Company name
Company address
Company city, state, ZIP code

Salutation / Greeting,

Insert body of cover letter

Note: the name and addresses(header) are not needed if you are writing this in an email. The salutation/greeting and body of cover letter should be in the email.

Sample Standard Cover Letter

I am writing to express my interest in the technical support position which was posted on LinkedIn. It is exciting to see that your company is growing at such a fast pace and introducing new products that are improving the customer experience. Your values of innovation and customer service are important to me, and I would love to be a part of your team.

I thoroughly understand the importance of effective communication between departments, as it is critical to ensure that customer issues are resolved in a timely manner. In my previous role at Sony, I resolved a high volume of customer issues and worked closely with multiple departments to identify, document, troubleshoot, and resolve customer complaints. I bring patience and an open mind to every interaction while being able to quickly analyze situations and come up with creative solutions.

Thank you for taking the time to review my resume. I believe that my skills and experience will support your department's goals of product improvement and increased customer satisfaction. Please contact me with any questions and to schedule an interview. I look forward to further discussing my qualifications for this opportunity.

Sample Cover Letter for Someone Who Has a Gap on Their Resume:

I am applying for the firmware engineering position. During my 10 years in the industry, I experienced increasing responsibility (from junior engineer to firmware developer lead).

I recently took a break and stepped away from corporate life. During my time away, I had the opportunity to volunteer where I honed my skills in organization, informal influence and identifying priorities. I also have remained focused on my technical skills through a certificate at UCSC Extension and short gig projects. I continue to be active in Women in Engineering in their College Mentor program.

XYZ corporation's focus on making computing technology accessible to all ages and socioeconomic groups fits my values and skill set. Let's talk!

Sample Cover Letter with a Referral:

I am applying for the position of employee communications specialist. Abby Chen, your marketing analyst, suggested I apply because she is familiar with my track record of delivering creative, targeted communication collateral that fits the company's vision. XYZ's reputation for transparency and employee well-being would make this role important and I have ideas to share on how to accomplish your goals.

Sample Cover Letter for a Career Change:

Please consider me for the front-end software engineering position at Accounting Software Inc.

With my accounting degree in hand, I worked for 10 years as an accountant. However, I kept seeing opportunities to streamline and automate our accounting processes so we could focus on more client concerns. Ever curious, I decided to make a career change into software engineering to see if I could make my ideas happen. I'm delighted to see your company has even bigger ideas about making accounting automated. I would like to join your team.

I have a new certificate in Web Design from UCSC Extension and participated in hackathons, coding challenges and gig projects to increase my coding and design skills. I bring a rare combination of knowledge -- both accounting and web design -- which will allow me to contribute at Accounting Software, Inc.'s projects.

I hope we can soon discuss our mutual interests and this position.