



WRITING YOUR COVER LETTER

**Don't wait on the shore
for your ship to come in.
Swim out to meet it.**

COVER LETTERS INTRODUCE YOU

If you haven't been paying attention to employment websites or LinkedIn, now's the time to start. When you find an ad that sounds like a good fit for you, it's possible you may need to create a targeted cover letter if the company asks for one.

Your resume is about the past; the ad is about the future; and your cover letter is the bridge between the two. If your cover letter does not capture an employer's attention, it is unlikely that the employer will turn the page to read the attached resume. There are too many other applications waiting to be considered.

A well-written cover letter makes an excellent first impression. Some people will make their interviewing decisions based on the cover letter alone, and only refer to the resume for back-up information. The cover letter is the guidepost to the resume.

Ideally, your cover letter should be able to stand on its own merits. With this in mind, your cover letter needs to set you apart from the competition. There are several ways you can do this by using the guidelines in this chapter.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING COVERS LETTERS

1. Personalize the letter with the full name and title of the person who should receive your resume. You can often get this information from the organization's website or LinkedIn
2. Do your research on the company or organization. Check the website and inquire through your network.
3. Use the Cover Letter Worksheet to organize your letter. You need about 75-80% of the qualifications the ad requires in order to be seriously considered.
4. Identify the hard skills from the ad in the upper left section of the worksheet. Hard skills include technical abilities, areas of expertise, practical know-how, industry knowledge and education, training or certifications. Opposite each phrase list your own corresponding skills in the upper right section of your worksheet. For example, sous chef experience—1 year in menu preparation and overseeing staff.
5. Identify the soft skills they want in the lower left section of your worksheet. Soft skills include teamwork, communication skills, interpersonal skills and other aptitudes that define your personal approach to the workplace. In the lower right section, list your corresponding soft skills. For example, customer service oriented—eight years of interacting with new and repeat customers courteously and efficiently. Companies are always on the lookout for candidates who have the ability to identify different problems and find and implement the solution effectively.
6. Next, rank your hard skills in the upper right section of the worksheet in order of the strength of your qualifications. Do the same for the soft skills in the lower right section. This will help you organize your letter to emphasize your best qualifications for the position.
7. Finally, add any other qualifications or qualities that are not mentioned in the ad, but might be helpful for this position. For example, speaking a second language, training others, additional computer skills or budget development experience.

Adding a sentence or two about the added value you would bring to the job can catch the attention of the employer. It is like offering the organization a bonus set of skills. That is certainly an incentive for them to read your resume and consider you for an interview. This is a step that most job seekers miss when writing a cover letter. Including a 'value added' sentence will help to set you apart from the crowd.

8. Use the Cover Letter Template later in this section and complete the Cover Letter Worksheet to guide your writing. Your letter should consist of four paragraphs:
 - **1st** opening paragraph with a research sentence referencing where you learned about the opportunity and something impressive about the organization
 - **2nd** paragraph about your hard skills as they relate to the job, with a brief example from your resume, quantified if possible, and a sentence about the added value you would bring
 - **3rd** paragraph about your soft skills as they relate to the job
 - **4th** closing paragraph indicating follow-up action, whenever possible
9. Write a research sentence to show the employer that you went to the trouble of finding out about the industry, the organization, the product or service. It will also demonstrate that you understand something about the organization and have a high regard for it.
10. Add a brief accomplishment statement from your resume to demonstrate your capabilities and entice the employer to take a look at your full resume. You can consider this the advertising 'hook' in your cover letter.
11. Keep your cover letter 'light and bright', like your resume. Use clear, concise sentences to make the letter appealing. Don't crowd the page. Limit your cover letter to four paragraphs and each paragraph to six to eight lines.
12. Limit the number of sentences that begin with the word "I". Aim to keep at least half of your sentences short.
13. Set up your letter carefully. Match the heading of the letter to the heading on your resume for a more professional look. Use a block style with a fully justified or left-justified layout. See sample cover letters/cover letter template.
14. Customize every letter you send out. Like snowflakes, no two should be identical. You may, of course, repeat phrases or even sentences that have worked well in previous cover letters, but examine each letter and make sure it fits the context of the ad. Beware of copying entire paragraphs, since it is likely that some changes, even small ones, will improve targeting to the current ad.
15. Watch for typos, spelling, spell-check errors, grammar, punctuation, repetition and spacing. Double-check the letter for accuracy before mailing it. To ensure that you didn't miss anything, ask someone else to proofread it. Another good idea is to finish it and then look at it the next day to see if there are any changes that need to be made before sending it.

DRAFT YOUR OWN COVER LETTER

These next pages include everything you need to begin writing your own cover letters. It's a good idea to practise drafting one now, so that when you need to write one quickly you've already had experience. If you have an ad that appeals to you, you can get started right away. If not, pick one that is closest to what you want, and use it for practice in writing a cover letter.

Complete the Cover Letter Worksheet on the following page to analyze the job advertised and match it to your qualifications. Use this information, together with the Cover Letter Template that follows, to begin your first draft.

Read the sample cover letters to get an idea of what they should contain. Sample Cover Letter #1 is designed to persuade an employer that you have the skills you need to transfer into another industry. Sample Cover Letter #2 is written in response to the sample job advertisement. Sample Cover Letter #3 outlines a close match to the employer's requirements.

You want your letter to be professional and persuasive, but not too formal. Use words that suit you and let your personality shine through in your cover letter.

**Keep yourself motivated by sticking to a daily routine.
Work with your own natural rhythms
to establish your most productive time of day,
and then develop a job search schedule around it.
A pattern of focused activity helps you get things done and keeps your
spirits up.**

COVER LETTER WORKSHEET

ADVERTISEMENT	You
HARD SKILLS	HARD SKILLS
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
SOFT SKILLS	SOFT SKILLS
•	•
•	•
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•	•
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•	•
•	•
•	•
ADDED VALUE YOU BRING TO THE JOB	
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COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

Name

Address

City, Province Postal Code

Telephone / email

Date

Name

Title

Company

Address

City, Province Postal Code

Reference # or Re: Job Title (if no reference number is available)

Dear Name,

[Opening Sentence]. Your recent advertisement on Indeed on [date] for a [title] sparked my interest in [industry/company]. [OR] It was with great interest that I read your posting on the [website] on [date] for the position of [title]. Research sentence. [This shows that you've made an effort to learn something about the company or organization. Check out the company's product, service or locations. Visit their website. Ask people you know for information.]

[Hard Skills Paragraph. 5-8 lines about fit in terms of the ad. Pull one brief fact from your resume.] In addition, I bring [added value].

[Soft Skills Paragraph. 3-5 lines about your management, teamwork, personal characteristics as they apply to the job.]

[Closing Paragraph]—[Active Close.] Thank-you. I will call you next Friday to discuss my qualifications further/ answer any questions you may have/see if a meeting is possible.

Sincerely,

Name

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #1

Name

Address

City, Province Postal Code

Telephone Email

Date

Name

Title

Company

Address

City, Province Postal Code

Re: Administration Clerk (Reference Number if available)

Dear Name,

Your recent advertisement on Indeed on September 20, 2018 sparked my interest in ABC Diamond Mine for the position of Administration Clerk. As a highly organized, proactive, and efficient professional with administrative support experience and excellent time management skills, I am prepared to contribute to your company's goals as your next Administrative Clerk.

I have had a very rewarding career in administration with one of Canada's largest mines and I am now looking forward to growing my experience with a new organization. My background includes a wide variety of general administrative duties to achieve office efficiency. From managing correspondence and preparing documents to answering phones and updating records, I excel at prioritizing tasks, collaborating with peers and management teams, and encouraging effective communication and organizational procedures.

My skills in general administration and organization, along with my positive attitude and work ethic, position me to excel in this role, and I am confident my additional strengths will translate to your environment. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this position and my qualifications with you further.

I will contact you the week of September 24th to discuss any questions you may have regarding my resume and set up a time for an interview.

Thank You

Susan Jones

SAMPLE ADVERTISEMENT

Career Opportunity for Warehouse Personnel

Career Opportunity for Warehouse Personnel

We want you to join our team and offer the best customer service to all of our customers.

Responsibilities & Qualifications

- Pays close attention to detail to maintain accuracy when picking orders
- Is a team player with excellent communication and customer service skills
- Forklift experience is required
- Candidates must be able to lift up to 75lbs
- Enjoys working in a fast paced environment
- Participates in inventory counts
- Has minimum 1 year experience in a previous position
- Receives and processes incoming shipments
- Maintains production lines supplied with empty containers and packaging materials as needed

If this sounds like you, send us your resume. We would love to hear from you!

[Company Name]

Come see how we're different. Contact us today!

[Name] at 416-555-5555 [Email] contactname@mail.com

Advertisement	You
Hard Skills	Hard Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forklift experience• At least 1 year of previous experience• Ability to lift 75lbs• Experience with inventory counts• Attention to detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1.5 years forklift experience• 1 year of warehouse experience• Can lift 100lbs• Has participated in quarterly inventory counts• Pays close attention to detail, which working in a timely manner
Soft Skills	Soft Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Team player• Communication• Customer Service• Enjoys working in a fast paced environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoys collaborating with team members• Strong communication skills both written and verbal• Is client focused• Thrives in a fast paced environment
Added Value You Bring to the Job	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Automated several manual programs	

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #2

Name
Address
City, Province Postal Code
Telephone Email

Date
Name
Title
Company
Address
City, Province Postal Code

Re: Warehouse Personnel (Reference Number if available)

Dear Name,

Your recent advertisement on Indeed on September 20, 2018 sparked my interest in Mercury Wood Products for the position of Warehouse Personnel. As a skilled, self-directed, and reliable professional with experience performing a range of general warehouse operations while ensuring compliance to regulations and guidelines, I possess the knowledge and experience to allow me to contribute toward the success of your company.

My background includes successfully receiving shipments, unloading goods, performing inventory counts, and stocking items while working with peers and management to maximize productivity and efficiency. Through my experience, I have become highly skilled at adhering to warehouse goals and requirements while facilitating streamlined operations.

My achievements that demonstrate my qualifications for this position include using various heavy machinery such as forklifts and pallet jacks. I have demonstrated superior interpersonal, communication and time management skills as well as earning a reputation as an excellent team player.

I will contact you the week of September 24th to discuss any questions you may have regarding my resume and set up a mutual time for an interview.

Sincerely,
Jack Russell

SAMPLE 'T-FORMAT' COVER LETTER #3

Intermediate Process Operator

Jane Smith

PO Box 111 Littleton, Saskatchewan S0E 1S1
306.345.9999 | jane.smith@hotmail.com

Robert Williams
Hiring Manager
ABC Mining Company
Box 555
Saskatoon, SK S0X 1S1

Re: Intermediate Process Operator position, Req ID# 2018-150

Dear Robert,

It is with great interest I am applying to the Intermediate Process Operator position with ABC Mining Company. Given your recent announcement with respect to expanding your operations, I am eager to become a part of this. With more than 4 years' mill operating experience I am confident that I am a great fit for this role.

While my enclosed resume provides an overview of my achievements, I have also listed some of your specific requirements for the position and my applicable skills:

Your Requirements:	My Qualifications:
3 – 5 years mill operating experience	4 years mill operating experience
Grade 12 diploma	Grade 12 diploma earned in 2009
Industrial water treatment experience	2 years industrial water treatment experience and working towards Level 1 certification
Identifying & reporting maintenance concerns	I identify issues and report to maintenance to resolve quickly and efficiently
Assist senior operators & strong team player	In my position, I assist all team members and supervisors to ensure production meets targets and deadlines
Organized, motivated and ambitious	I set in place new procedures and have a willingness to learn new machinery or processes. Excellent attendance record.
Safety conscious	Recognized by leadership team with a 2017 safety site award
Excellent communication skills	Known for communicating clearly and comfortable expressing ideas to assist with efficiency

I am looking forward to learning more about this opportunity. I can be reached at 306.345.9999 or jane.smith@hotmail.com

Yours sincerely,

Jane Smith

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