

# LETTERS & REFERENCES

## Introductions and Follow Up



### CREATING A COVER LETTER

A cover letter accompanies a resume. Its purpose is to tell the reader WHY you are writing or WHY he/she is receiving your resume. You want to convince the employer you are a qualified candidate for a position and should be considered for an interview. Use the same font style and size as you did on your resume.

Address someone in authority by name and title. If you don't have this information, use a functional title, such as Dear Manager of Operations.

Customize your cover letter for each employer and situation. Be sure to include:

- **Reason for contact:** This is the purpose of the letter. Explain how you learned of the job opening (networking contact, job posting, cold call, etc).
- **Requirements:** Review the job requirements. Be sure you understand the employer's needs. State your skills and accomplishments accordingly, and market yourself as a qualified candidate.
- **Your resume:** Indicate in your letter that you are enclosing a resume, transcripts or other documents for the employer's consideration. The purpose is to show proof of statements you have made about your qualifications.
- **Follow-up plan:** Indicate when you will contact the person to follow up. Don't forget to follow through by marking it on your daily schedule.

### USE A CONSISTENT HEADER

Be consistent with the content font style and size used on the headers of every document you submit. By doing so, you have essentially created a letterhead on all your documents.

### USING YOUR COVER LETTER IN AN EMAIL

One option to consider is to copy and paste your cover letter into the body of your email. This way, the reader sees the information upon opening the email. A well-written email (cover letter) may pique the interest of the reader enough to open the resume. However, many employers specifically request that applicants send both the resume and the cover letter attached as a .doc file (or some other specification). Following employers' directions for submittals is always first and foremost. If an employer provides no specific directions for submittals, copy and paste the cover letter content in the email body and send it as an attachment as well.

### CREATING A REFERENCES PAGE

References are individuals (personal or professional) who can vouch for your work history, skills or character. References should always be on a separate page and include the individual's name, their association to you, their professional affiliation, and a phone number and/or email. DO NOT include them on your resume.

Prepare both documents and carry copies with you to the interview. However, ONLY submit them to the employer if requested. Remember, a company may receive hundreds of resumes and cover letters. For efficiency, a company does not request these documents unless they are truly considering you for a position.

**BEFORE** you include someone in your reference list:

Ask the person for permission to be on your reference list. Tell your references that employers may contact them concerning your skills and character traits. Talk to your references and discuss what you want employers to know about you. List at least 3–5 people who can discuss you from a professional standpoint – rather than as a friend or acquaintance.

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Make sure references are:

- Respectable and trustworthy
- Not related to you by blood or marriage
- Positive and will say positive things about your skills and character traits
- You can include an email address below the phone number. Remember to remove the underline from the email address.

Always thank your references.

Remind the interviewer of the position for which you were interviewed, as well as the date and place of the interview. Express your appreciation. Confirm your interest in working for the company. What skills did the interviewer consider important for the position? Do you have the skills that were considered important? Include those skills and qualifications. Did you forget to mention something in the interview? Include any forgotten information. If travel, relocation or a similar subject was discussed during the interview, summarize and reiterate these topics with the reader. Close with a suggestion for further action, such as a desire to move to the next step in the process.

## THANK YOU LETTERS

A thank you letter should be sent after an interview or phone call. Use the letter to re-emphasize your potential value to the company, correct any misunderstandings and add forgotten points. Remember to restate your interest in the position and the organization. Send the letter within 24 hours after your interview or phone call. Also, a thank you email is generally not recommended. More than a third of emails are deleted without being read.

Use the same heading as on your resume.

**Date** (Example: November 1, 2017)

*(1 of 4 spaces)*

*(2 of 4 spaces)*

*(3 of 4 spaces)*

*(4 of 4 spaces)*

**Mr., Ms. or Dr.** (Last name)

**Title of Employee**

**Company Name**

**Street Address**

**City, State, Zip**

*(1 space)*

**Dear Mr., Ms. or Dr.** (Last name)