

GET THE JOB

Creating a Convincing Cover Letter

Cover letters let you communicate your personality, creativity and individuality to a hiring manager. It allows you to connect with the person hiring and demonstrate whether you are a good fit.

It can be a daunting task. You don't want a cookie-cutter letter that you cut and paste for every job. This is your opportunity to shine and to show that you've researched a job.

The Harvard Business Review quotes the author of "Great on the Job," Jodi Glickman, who stresses the importance of always submitting a cover letter, "It's your best chance of getting the attention of the HR person or hiring manager and an important opportunity to distinguish yourself from everyone else."

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Research is the first step. Read the job description several times. Visit the company's website. Head to social media and see what company executives and employees post on their Twitter feeds, their



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Instagram pages, their LinkedIn profiles.

Pay attention to the tone so you can match it in your cover letter. When possible, use the language that they use. Find the name of the hiring manager so your cover letter can address them by name.

The Harvard Business Review recommends reaching out to a hiring manager via

email or phone to ask smart questions about the job—and then mentioning in the cover letter that you spoke.

DETERMINE WHAT TO INCLUDE

Keep your cover letter to a single page — it's unlikely a hiring manager will read more — so plan carefully what to include.

A survey from the Society

for Human Resources said the top three things that organizations want to read in a cover letter are the ways a candidate's past experience meets the job's requirements, how their skills are a good match for the job and why the candidate wants to work at the organization and in the job they are applying for.

Give examples of how you can meet the challenges that

the company is facing. Provide evidence of what sets you apart and ways you have demonstrated the skills and abilities they are looking for. Anecdotes help you tell your story.

SET THE TONE

Start strong. Your first sentence shouldn't state the obvious such as "I'm applying for this job." Grab your reader's attention with a statement of who you are.

Be enthusiastic. Convince the hiring manager that you really want the job. While you need to be professional — avoid humor or platitudes — you should show personality. Be authentic and truthful. Don't sound desperate or engage in flattery.

END STRONG

Include a call to action. Be polite, open-ended and give them a reason to contact you. Consider ending with a question as it can inspire a natural reaction on the part of the hiring manager to answer it.

PROOFREAD

Make sure your cover letter is free of errors or typos. Ask a friend or trusted mentor to read the letter. Set it aside for a day and then read it carefully several times to make sure you have said what you wanted to say the way you want to say it.