

GET THE JOB

How to Write the Perfect Cover Letter

Talk with career services experts, and you'll hear different takes on the state of the cover letter in 2020. Some may tell you they are a thing of the past due to the onset of digital job boards and applicant tracking systems used by companies to screen incoming documents.

Others will tell you the exact opposite: that cover letters are more vital than ever to a successful job search.

The truth? Probably somewhere in the middle.

No matter how important you feel the cover letter is, the fact remains that it should always be customized to match the job announcement you are targeting. Nothing will get you in the "rejected" pile quicker than a cookie-cutter cover letter that you share blindly with dozens of other companies.

Hiring managers today are looking for custom, targeted messaging that speaks directly to how you will help the company grow and how you fit their culture.

But how do you find out



© ADOBE STOCK

what their growth goals are and how their culture is structured?

Simple: Research.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Before you apply for any position, you should be checking out their online presence. This means visiting their website and surfing through their social media feeds. These are gold mines for employee reviews that can give you insights into how the company runs.

Are their people happy? Do they offer opportunities for advancement? You'll likely be able to find it with a bit of

online research.

Once you understand what a company stands for, how it treats its employees and what type of community or professional engagements they are currently involved in, you can start to structure a tailored cover letter to catch their attention.

KEEP IT SHORT

A cover letter is not a novel. Some experts suggest keeping it to three or four paragraphs. Also consider breaking down some of the information into bullets to keep the cover letter from becoming too dense.

Information you can break

into bullets includes:

- Companies you've been with.
- A few key projects you've executed.
- Some of the quantifiable wins you've achieved.
- A short list of your specialties.

Doing so keeps your cover letter broken into digestible pieces that a hiring manager or recruiter can get through in less than 30 seconds.

GET SPECIFIC

It's great to say you are a transformational leader with a history of generating bottom-line results. But what are

the actual results? Can you give your reader specific numbers?

A more powerful example of a similar sentence would be: "Demonstrated success driving up to \$5 million in bottom-line growth via process improvements and change management."

Give your reviewers actual numbers they can sink their teeth into. This will not only impress them, but will also differentiate your document from the others in their review pile.

GET STARTED

Remember that the main purpose of a cover letter is to serve as an introductory document and add a little color to your resume. The cover letter is meant to be a supplemental material instead of a standalone one.

But don't drown yourself in the details or you'll never get started. Think about the few main few points you'd like to share with your next prospective employer. What are your key strengths? How are you different than your competition? What soft skills do you have to share, such as communications, relationship building and collaboration.

Put all of this information into a polished format and don't forget to check for spelling or grammatical errors before sending it into the marketplace.

GET THE JOB



© ADOBE STOCK

How to Write the Perfect Cover Letter

Talk with career services experts, and you'll hear different takes on the state of the cover letter in 2020. Some may tell you they are a thing of the past due to the onset of digital job boards and applicant tracking systems used by companies to screen incoming documents.

Others will tell you the exact opposite: that cover letters are more vital than ever to a successful job search.

The truth? Probably somewhere in the middle.

No matter how important you feel the cover letter is, the fact remains that it should always be customized to match the job announcement you are targeting. Nothing will get you in the "rejected" pile quicker than a cookie-cutter cover letter that you share blindly with dozens of other companies.

Hiring managers today are looking for custom, targeted messaging that speaks direct-

ly to how you will help the company grow and how you fit their culture.

But how do you find out what their growth goals are and how their culture is structured?

Simple: Research.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Before you apply for any position, you should be checking out their online presence. This means visiting their website and surfing through their social media feeds. These are gold mines for employee reviews that can give you insights into how the company runs.

Are their people happy? Do they offer opportunities for advancement? You'll likely be able to find it with a bit of online research.

Once you understand what a company stands for, how it treats its employees and what type of community or professional engagements they are currently involved in, you can start to structure a tailored cover letter to catch their attention.

KEEP IT SHORT

A cover letter is not a novel. Some experts suggest keeping it to three or four paragraphs. Also consider breaking down some of the information into bullets to keep the cover letter from becoming too dense.

Information you can break into bullets includes:

- Companies you've been with.
- A few key projects you've executed.

• Some of the quantifiable wins you've achieved.

• A short list of your specialties.

Doing so keeps your cover letter broken into digestible pieces that a hiring manager or recruiter can get through in less than 30 seconds.

GET SPECIFIC

It's great to say you are a transformational leader with a history of generating bottom-line results. But what are the actual results? Can you give your reader specific numbers?

A more powerful example of a similar sentence would be: "Demonstrated success driving up to \$5 million in bottom-line growth via process improvements and change management."

Give your reviewers actual numbers they can sink their teeth into. This will not only impress them, but will also differentiate your document

from the others in their review pile.

GET STARTED

Remember that the main purpose of a cover letter is to serve as an introductory document and add a little color to your resume. The cover letter is meant to be a supplemental material instead of a standalone one.

But don't drown yourself in the details or you'll never get started. Think about the main few main points you'd like to share with your next prospective employer. What are your key strengths? How are you different than your competition? What soft skills do you have to share, such as communications, relationship building and collaboration.

Put all of this information into a polished format and don't forget to check for spelling or grammatical errors before sending it into the marketplace.

HOT JOB PROFILE

OPTOMETRISTS

Number of jobs in 2019: 44,400

Job outlook, 2019-29: 4% (as fast as average)

Employment change, 2019-29: 1,900

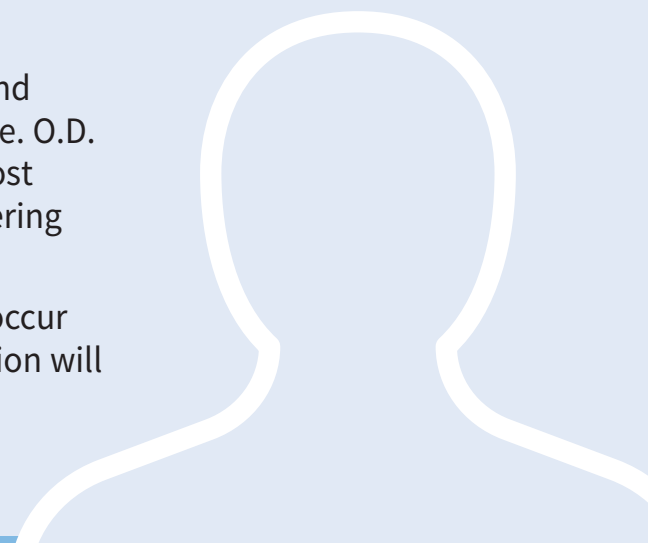
The role: Optometrists diagnose and treat visual problems and manage diseases, injuries and other disorders of the eyes.

Education required: Optometrists must complete a

Doctor of Optometry (O.D.) degree program and obtain a license to practice in a particular state. O.D. programs take four years to complete, and most students have a bachelor's degree before entering such a program.

The need: Because vision problems tend to occur more frequently later in life, an aging population will lead to demand for more optometrists.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



AD SPACE