

Randstad Employment Tips

Create an Effective Cover Letter



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A cover letter is generally your first opportunity to impress a prospective employer. It can help you secure an interview opportunity—not a job. Keep it precise, positive and professional. Make sure it follows today's business letter rules and contains the following information:

- **Paragraph 1**—Introduce yourself, explain why you are writing—stating precisely the position you are seeking—and give some indication of where you obtained information about the company or position.
- **Paragraph 2**—Explain why you feel you are the very best candidate for the position. State how your experience and background fits the job and how you can contribute to the company's business objectives if hired. Be sure to refer to your resume at least once in the body of the letter.
- **Paragraph 3**—Thank the reader for his/her consideration and mention where and when you might be reached to schedule an interview. Don't hesitate to mention that you will be following up with a phone call within the next week.

Additional tips

- Always attach a brief, businesslike cover letter to your resume. Because many resumes are being professionally developed, remember that cover letters carry extra weight.
- Type all letters to prospective employers; do not handwrite them.
- If possible, personalize the letter; address it to a specific person and make sure to check the spelling of the company and the recipient's name.
- Write with the reader's needs in mind.
- Follow up letters with calls.
- Use referrals, if possible; recommendations may enhance your credibility with potential employers and your chances of securing an interview opportunity.
- Match cover letter paper stock and color to resume.
- Don't type up one "standard" letter and send it out to several prospective employers.

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