



Cover Letters Uncovered

Most companies do not want cover letters. Just take a look at any 50 job orders on the web and few will demand much less ask for a cover letter. They don't have time to plow through any more paperwork than they have to. Cover letters are usually full of platitudes (Thank you for considering me; I'll look forward to discussing my wonderful background with you; appreciate your taking the time to read my resume; If you don't call me in a week, I'll call you and pester the heck out of your secretary.. .etc.) or they overflow with self aggrandizing fluff (Self starter; work well with people; multi-tasker; proven track record... etc.) In many cases they repeat what is in the resume only no where near as good. Many are vague, 'I'd like a job in sales or in marketing or in management, whatever you have is OK with me' or 'I'd like a job with a company that will train me, promote me (hasn't been hired and is looking for a promotion) and one that has good ethics and morals and is in a growth mode'.

The reason most companies request a cover letter is to give them the opportunity to ask about what is not included on the resume... **earnings or salary requirements or expectations**. You will find this request neatly slipped into the sentence that asks for a cover letter.

If no cover letter is requested the email that contains the resume should usually contain the briefest of information: **TO – FROM – SUBJECT** (*the job order title*) - **Resume Attached** (*as a WORD document*). Let the resume do the job it is designed to do... get you interviews. People pay anywhere from \$200 to \$1,000 for a resume designed to get them interviews, then defeat it with a long, say nothing blathering cover letter.

While there are five cover letters, lets start with three of them: Specific Job, No Job & Generic The **Generic** has two variations:

- No Job Posting* - It is simple & basic, the goal being to get the recipient to read the resume. It should look something like this:

To: Human Resources

Re: Openings for (list two or three titles that cover the positions you are qualified for)

Fr: (Your name, resume attached)

- Job Posting with no cover letter request* - Also very simple but addressed to the person or place of that job order.

To: (name of the person posting the job if available, otherwise the company name)

Re: (the job title and number given in the ad/posting)

Fr: (Your name & resume attached)

To help you craft your **Generic cover letter**, you need to:

1. Send us your best attempt at a cover letter citing no more than (3) key attributes.
2. We will edit and provide you the text within the context of an email that you can use to cut and paste into a new email directed to potential employers.

The **Specific Cover Letter** is tied to a specific job order that **REQUIRES** a cover letter. You should read between the lines of their request. If they are using it as an excuse to get salary information, fine, indulge them but resist the effort to wax eloquent about yourself... and getting in the way of the resume. In some cases, they are truly interested in your ability to express yourself, then by all means do so, but keep it to one page and try not to outdo the resume. **You need to:**

1. Send us a copy of the job order requesting the cover letter so we can see why they are asking for one and what it is they are looking for.
2. Write your own letter as to what you feel they are looking for. This is the only way we can teach you how to write a proper one.

3. We then take their Job Order and your letter and edit it to one that meets the needs of the company and your goal, which is to garner an interview. Remember this, **KISS... Keep It Simple Sweetheart...**so as not to take away from the resume. Keep your eyes open for an opportunity to allow us to teach you this vital skill.

When a job order asks for experience in a particular area and you have such experience but you do not feel it is adequately covered on your resume you should do so in the cover letter whether they ask for one or not. You should not do this with more than three items, preferably only one or two. The approach should go something like this:

Your job requirements specify experience in _____. While the attached resume basically qualifies me for the position I have experience in that area as follows:

- (Try to keep this to 2 or 3 one line bullets)

Additionally you wanted experience in _____. My background includes:

- (Again, keep this to 2 or 3 one line bullets)

Recruiter & Employment Service Cover Letters:

Most Recruiters get hundreds of resumes a week. Like gate keepers at companies, their finger is poised over the delete button, while they look for people they can use. So make them love you. **KISS**, Keep It Simple Sweetheart. There are only three things they need to know in the cover letter before looking at your resume:

1. **Job Titles:** Give them two or three titles of the jobs you are qualified to fill. If you are responding to a specific job order that you feel you are qualified for then use their title. This will not be true in most cases, so use the three titles.
2. **Money:** Give them a base salary range and a total earnings requirement (if it includes bonuses and/or commissions) These ranges can be fairly wide, but should be realistic for the marketplace.
3. **Employed:** If you are employed, let them know. Their stock in trade is presenting employed prospects to their client companies. If not employed leave this off.

If the Recruiter or Employment service is located near you the best approach is to go see them in person. People is always better than Paper. **Don't call for an appointment** or you will get their standard response. "Send us your resume" Include them on your list of companies to visit and drop in. Let them see you, hear you, and take your measure.

Cover Letter Advice

Please Give Us Your [Feedback](#).