

COVER/MARKETING LETTER INFORMATION & CONSTRUCTION TIPS

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Below you will find **General Cover/Marketing Letter Information**, along with **Construction Tips** to use with a variety of other resources and information as you construct *your letter*. Obtain as many ideas as possible for *your letter* by referring to several samples. Keep in mind that the final version that may work best will differ from the samples you view. For example, you will likely have additional experiences that you bring to the table or there may be different responsibilities to address within the letter.

WHAT IS A COVER/MARKETING LETTER?

While a resume is your personal marketing piece for a job search, a Cover/Marketing Letter introduces you to an employer and quickly explains why you are sending a resume. For a professional look, use the same heading from your resume on your cover letter. When mailing or providing application materials in person, use the same resume quality paper for both methods.

Cover/Marketing letters are generally not requested within a position advertisement, but they are expected as part of professional job searching etiquette. Their use also helps you to stand out as a candidate. When applying for graduate schools, you may wish to include a cover/marketing letter and a resume in addition to the application materials that are required in order to stand out as an applicant. Adjust the cover/marketing letter format and samples to fit your needs.

COVER/MARKETING LETTER CONTENT/FORMAT:

- The first paragraph concisely states who you are and why you are writing. Include information on what job you are applying for and where/how you learned about the opening. This can be done in 2-3 sentences.
- The second and third (if needed) paragraphs tell the employer what you can do for the company based on your experience and skills. Briefly refer to your resume here, but go into further depth about the story your resume begins to tell.
- The closing paragraph wraps up the letter by stating your interest in the position, requesting an interview and offering when you will follow-up, as well as restating your phone number for the employer to reach you.
- Adjust each cover letter you write to fit the specific position and company. Save your cover letters for reference during your search, as well as for assistance in writing future letters. Keep hard copies in your Career Planning Portfolio.
www.citadel.edu/career_services/CareerPlanningPortfolio.htm

WHEN TO SEND A COVER/MARKETING LETTER:

Applying for Positions through *The Gate*

Within *The Gate*, when you elect to forward your resume in response to a posted position, you may also include a Cover/Marketing Letter. It is important to refer to the job posting to see if an employer requests one. If a cover/marketing letter is not requested, it is still appropriate for you to include one in order to stand out as a candidate and confirm your interest in the opportunity.

Develop a general cover/marketing letter and revise it for each specific position you apply for within *The Gate* (and outside of the system). Save each of these versions for future reference, keeping copies on your hard drive, an external source, and hard copy in addition to your account on *The Gate*. Be sure to proofread all cover/marketing letters for grammar, spelling, and content before uploading to your Gate account.

Applying for Positions through Other Sources

- Send a cover letter, along with a copy of your resume, when you are contacting an employer to learn about possible openings within the company. (Be sure to have researched the company and have looked for posted job opportunities on their website or a job line by phone before sending a "cold" introduction cover letter).
- When applying for jobs online, if possible, include a cover letter. Usually, this is only possible if the company asks for you to send your resume as an email attachment. In such a case, you should also send your cover letter as an email

attachment. If you are asked to cut and paste your resume onto the company's form, then you will likely not be able to include a cover letter. HOWEVER, go the extra mile and mail a cover letter, along with a copy of your resume, to the company and indicate in the cover letter that you completed the online application. Or if you are contacted by email soon after applying online and are provided an appropriate email address, reply and include a cover letter and another copy of your resume as attachments (or combine into one attachment).

· Send a cover letter, along with a copy of your resume, to an alumnus when you request his/her advice on your job search. In the cover letter, introduce yourself, indicate what your career goals are, and restate your contact information so that the alumnus may assist you in the best way possible.

· Send a cover letter, when applying for summer internships or jobs related to your major. For some seasonal positions, a cover letter and a resume will not be necessary, but could make the difference between your candidacy and everyone else who simply completed the application.

COVER LETTER TIPS:

- Always send an original cover letter WITH your resume on matching stationery.
- Always find out a name to address it to, AVOID "Dear Sir or Madam."
- Use a "you" centered approach; show what you can offer the employer rather than ask what the employer can do for you.
- Be careful NOT to use too many "I" sentence openers.
- Use specific examples and details about your background and experience.
- Elaborate on information presented in your resume, DO NOT repeat it.
- Use the company's name rather than saying "your company."
- DO NOT volunteer negative information about yourself.
- Write an ORIGINAL cover letter, DO NOT just copy someone else's!
- Do not rely on spell check to catch any misspelled words. Errors can be costly!
- REMEMBER to sign the letter in ink.
- Avoid the phrase "I feel" and replace it with "I am confident, or I believe."
- Trouble getting started? Imagine the employer is standing in front of you. What do you want to tell him/her? Write it down and then tweak it to fit in a cover letter format.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Additional information regarding cover letter writing may be found in Martin Yate's book entitled: *Cover Letters That Knock 'Em Dead*. A copy is available for review in the Career Center. www.knockemdead.com