

WRITING AN IMPACTFUL COVER LETTER

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Cover letters are useless, right? Wrong! There's a nasty rumour going around that cover letter writing is irrelevant and won't help you secure that dream job you've been after, but we're here to set the record straight and give you a few helpful writing tips along the way.

Next to your resume, a well written cover letter is the most valuable document you have in your job seeker toolkit and when written correctly, can help your application stand out amongst the rest.

A cover letter is a concise document that outlines why your skills and experiences make you the best candidate for the job, in four paragraphs or less. It compliments your resume and is a place to highlight important and relevant skills or accomplishments.

But, before you begin crafting your cover letter, carefully read through the employer job description; this will help you understand your audience, and allow you to better tailor your cover letter to the reader.

For instance, if you're applying to an agricultural communications agency and the job description indicates "creativity" as a job requirement; inject some of your creative edge into your cover letter copy. Likewise, if you're applying for a government position, and are asked to demonstrate business acumen, it is probably best to thread a formal tone throughout your cover letter.

With that said we completely understand that cover letter writing can be a down-right scary and time consuming task, especially since human resource professionals may only skim your well-crafted document. Below you'll find some helpful tips on how to write an effective cover letter.

WRITING TIPS:

- **Tailor your cover letter to each job you're applying to, always!** We cannot stress this one enough.

Your cover letter is a personalized document that you're using to convince the reader to look at your enclosed resume. Take some time to make sure you clearly state why you're the best candidate for the job, based on the qualifications the job description is asking for.

- **Don't rehash your resume in your cover letter.** Your cover letter is a complimentary document and a

relevant skill or exceeded expectations in your current role.

- **Don't overcomplicate the sentences within your cover letter by utilizing descriptive diction.** In other words, use plain language.
- **Avoid including meaningless, overused adjectives** like: aggressive, creative and independent. Instead, use action verbs like: wrote, managed, and

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place for you to establish a voice and target why your skills and experiences are a good fit for the role you're applying to.

- **Identify keywords within the job description and include them in your cover letter.** This will help you when applying through a company's applicant tracking system (ATS) or talent management system (TMS).
- **Make the reader's job easy by including the job title and the reference number in the reference line.** Include the date, your name and contact details in case your cover letter is separated from your resume during the application process.
- **Keep the font style and size consistent with your resume.** It is recommended to use an easy-to-read, sans serif font, like Arial.
- **Include where you heard about the job opening,** whether you saw the position on AgCareers.com, heard about the position through a friend or found the job on the employer's corporate career site. If you were referred by an existing employee, include their name, this will help to set you apart.

collaborated with, to describe exactly what you accomplished.

FORMATTING TIPS:

First Paragraph: Introduce yourself, what job you're applying to and state where you heard about the position.

Second and Third Paragraphs: This is the meat of your cover letter. In paragraph two, highlight any skills or experiences you've gained that fit with the qualifications in the job description. Use concrete examples and evidence to show the reader why you're a strong contender for the job.

State growth numbers wherever possible. If you have a considerable amount of experience related to the position, it might be a good idea to break this section up into two separate paragraphs to make your cover letter easier to read.

Fourth Paragraph: Thank the reader for their time and consideration and express again your interest in the position you're applying to. Let the reader know you look forward to being reached at their earliest convenience to further discuss your interest and qualifications in the position.

It's a good idea to list your contact information again in this paragraph.

Your Name

(c) 999.555.4444
(e) yourname@gmail.com

54 Imaginary Lane
Earth, IA 12345

September 17, 2012

Company Name
45 Yellow Brick Road, Unit A
Earth, IA 12345

Re: **Sales Agronomist**

Dear Hiring Manager,

Please accept this letter and attached resume as a statement of my interest in the **Sales Agronomist** position available with Company Name. I became aware of this opportunity while searching on AgCareers.com. Please accept my attached resume for review.

As a team player with natural leadership skills and a strong background in customer service, this position is the type of opportunity that I am looking for. I have had much success working in a similar role and exceeded my monthly sales targets by an average of 25% while keeping operating costs to a minimum. My clients value my dedication to the job and I have been described by past business leaders as possessing a high level of business acumen and agronomic knowledge.

I have a degree from a Credible University in Agricultural Science with a concentration in Agronomy, and believe that my educational background coupled with my excellent salesmanship will help achieve your sales goals and grow your company's client base.

I am very excited about the possibility of working with Your Company, as I have a passion for the agricultural industry and a knack for the sales function. I would sincerely appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss my interest and qualifications in this position. Please feel free to contact me at 999.555.4444 at your convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Enclosed: Resume