

Notes!

Job Hunting 101

Cover Letters

A cover letter gives you a chance to introduce yourself in a positive light so that you can highlight the things that make you the best person for the job.

Basic Cover Letter Guidelines

- A cover letter should be customized to market the job hunter to a specific open position.
- A cover letter needs to show that you know the culture and goals of the company and that you will fit into the company.
- A cover letter should use the same keywords as the job description and should begin to link your skills and experiences with the job description.
- A cover letter should be brief and to the point and written in proper business letter format with active verbs as much as possible.
- A cover letter can be used to overcome a lack of experience by showing that you can generalize other information and experiences to this type of job.

Building a Cover Letter

1. Find out the name of the hiring person or HR Director to put in the letter. Do not use *Sir or Madame* or, even worse, *To Whom It May Concern*.

Paragraph 1: Tell which position you are applying for, display enthusiasm that includes your vision for the position, and introduce three skills and/or qualifications that you are going to focus on (should match what job description indicates is important).

I am replying to your internal posting for the Reference Librarian II position. As you know, I have supervised the Circulation and Technical Services departments as a Librarian II and am excited about the opportunity to head a customer-focused, dynamic reference and collection development department. I have more than 16 years of management experience and have won several awards for excellent customer service, management, and performance during that time.

2. Paragraph 2: Describe the best things you have that relate to the three things they are looking for:

Before coming to Brentwood, I worked as an intern in User Services at MTSU, during which time I developed and taught several library instruction courses, created several online tutorials, adapted the *Using Voyager* module in SearchPath, and received several positive patron comments about my work at the reference desk. My graduate studies include elective courses on technology in libraries; library management; advanced electronic searching and database evaluation; preservation of materials, including digital initiatives; and social science reference. I finished at the top of my class and won the 2004 Academic Achievement Award as well as winning the 2004 North America Roger K. Summit Award for electronic searching in Dialog.

3. Paragraph 3: Take care of the housekeeping issues, thank them for their time and effort, and close with the assumption that you will be interviewed:

I have enclosed my resume as requested and included letters of recommendation for your convenience. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions or requests. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to talking with you about this opportunity.

April 7, 2009

Mr. Charles Sherrill, Director
The Brentwood Library
8109 Concord RD
Brentwood, TN 37027

Dear Mr. Sherrill:

I am replying to your internal posting for the Reference Librarian II position. As you know, I have supervised the Circulation and Technical Services departments as a Librarian II and am excited about the opportunity to head a customer-focused, dynamic reference and collection development department. I have more than 16 years of management experience and have won several awards for excellent customer service, management, and performance during that time.

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I have enclosed my resume as requested and included letters of recommendation for your convenience. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions or requests. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to talking with you about this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Ann Clapp
(615) 555-5555
clappa@brentwood-tn.org



Use the same readable font that you used on your resume and the same nice white paper.



Have a good editor proofread your letter. You cannot overcome a bad cover letter.



Include your phone number and email on the cover letter. Some employers will call before even looking at the resume.