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Cutting Edge Cover Letters

From [Alison Doyle](#),
Your Guide to [Job Searching](#).
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Writing Cover Letters That Work

What does it take for your resume and cover letter to make an impact when the employer has received hundreds of resumes for the position you have applied for? I've spoken to employers who receive 400-500 resumes for every position they list on a major job site like Monster or CareerBuilder. It seems like an almost impossible task to weed through them to find the best candidates to interview.

Making the Cut

Employers do manage to reduce the pool of cover letters and resumes to a manageable number. How they do it can give you some insight in to how to write cover letters that will make the cut. Because, if your cover letter doesn't pass muster, your resume won't even get a look.

If your cover letter and resume aren't perfect they most likely will end up in the reject pile. And perfect means perfect - there should not be any typos or grammatical errors.

Employers typically won't even consider a candidate that they cannot see is qualified at first glance.

That first glance at your cover letter is your one opportunity to make a good impression and make it to the next round.

Targeted Cover Letters

It's certainly easier to write generic or blanket cover letters than it is to write a cover letter specifically targeted to each position you apply for. However, if you don't invest the time in writing cover letters you're probably not going to get the interview, regardless of your qualifications.

Here are some suggestions on how to write cutting edge cover letters that work:

Make a Match

This one takes some time and effort and it's not always easy, but, it's important. Take the job posting and list the criteria the employer is looking for. Then list the skills and experience you have. Either address how your skills match the job in paragraph form or list the criteria and your qualifications.

Sample Job Posting

BOX OFFICE MANAGER. Conduct, oversee subscription and ticket sales for events. Generate and maintain reports, perform accounting activities related to box office revenue, oversee operations. Requires customer service skills and accounting experience.

Cover Letter Example 1: Paragraph

As Box Office Assistant for the Light Opera Company I was responsible for customer service, ticketing patrons, and generating and maintaining box office reports. In addition, I maintained records and accounting reports for all box office transactions.

Cover Letter Example 2: List

Box Office Manager Requirements:

Conduct, oversee subscription and ticket sales for events
Generate and maintain reports, perform accounting activities
Customer service skills and accounting experience

My Skills and Experience:

Box office management including ticketing, maintenance of records and ticket database management
Maintain and generate reports
Box office accounting transaction and reporting
Customer service, seating, and ticketing patrons

As you can see, in both cases, the candidate has written a detailed cover letter that should pass the first screening. In order to pass that screening, you must specifically address the job ad and state why you are qualified for the position.

Given this competitive job market, it is critically important to target your cover letter and your resume. That way the employer knows exactly why you are qualified for the position and why they should consider you for an interview.

The Right Stuff - Or Not? What to do if you don't have the right stuff? It's a certainty that the person with ten years of child care experience, and no computer experience, who applied for an Oracle programmer position at a colleague's company won't get an interview. I hate to sound pessimistic, but, if your qualifications don't come close to matching the criteria for the job, I would save your time and the company's time and not apply. In most cases, there are too many qualified candidates whose cover letter and resume will make the cut.

Instead, focus on applying for jobs you do qualify for and spend some time gaining the additional skills or education (volunteer, take a class, etc.) you need to prepare to apply for positions that are a rung or two up the ladder.

Resume Resources

- [How to Write a Resume](#)
- [Resume Samples](#)
- [Resumes and Cover Letters That Work!](#)
- [10 Steps to a Killer Resume](#)
- [Posting Your Resume Online](#)
- [Resume Writing Software](#)

Cover Letter Resources

- [Cutting Edge Cover Letters](#)
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