

# 10 Elements of a Great Cover Letter

Your [cover letter](#) could be the difference between getting selected for an interview and missing out on the job of your dreams. While the digital age may have changed how you apply for jobs, many employers still demand traditional cover letters. Be sure yours makes the best first impression by meeting the following criteria:

## 1. Uniqueness

Many hiring managers will trash a cover letter if it's not customized. Putting in the extra time and effort to write a unique cover letter can make all the difference in the success of your application. There's nothing wrong with following a formula, but use custom language for each job and company. This simple step shows you're taking the opportunity seriously.

## 2. Personalization

Skip "To Whom It May Concern" and personalize your greeting instead by using the name of the hiring manager. Check the job listing for their name and contact details. If the information isn't included, search the company website or call the human resources office.

## 3. Ease of Use

It's still accepted practice to include your mailing address in the header of your cover letter, but also remember to include your email address, cellphone number, and website (if you have one). Put this information front and center so a hiring manager can quickly find it when they're ready to contact you.

## 4. Persuasion

The first one or two sentences after your greeting should demonstrate why you're the best candidate for the job. Giving a very specific reason will grab the hiring manager's attention and encourage them to keep reading.

## 5. Concision

Hiring managers tend to prefer a cover letter of half a page or less in length. Your aim is to grab their attention and highlight your experience – not recite everything in your resume. Include a few key points that will entice the hiring manager to read on (and request an interview).

When you send a cover letter digitally, be sure to add links to your website, portfolio, social media channels, and any other sites that apply.

## 6. Relevance

Don't simply list your skills. Instead, describe how they apply to this particular job. You need to do this even if your past work experience is not in the same industry! You're trying to convince the hiring manager you're worth interviewing. It's the "why," not the "what," that sells.

## **7. Optimization**

Hiring managers are often pressed for time. They may not read every word of your cover letter, so you'll want to include industry-relevant keywords that will help them quickly understand that you're a match for position.

## **8. Eagerness**

Show genuine interest in not only the position, but also in the company as a whole. Do your research and find out about its values, mission, and notable achievements. Again, putting in the extra effort will help your application stand out and show that you're not just sending the same cover letter to every job you are applying for.

## **9. Straightforwardness**

End your cover letter with a strong closing statement. Thank the hiring manager for taking the time to review your application and include a call to action – most likely a request for an interview.

## **10. Grammatical Correctness**

Check (and double-check) your spelling and grammar. Simple mistakes can land your cover letter in the trash bin. Don't rely on autocorrect or spell check, since these programs don't always pick up all errors. Read and reread the letter yourself, then ask a friend to do the same.

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The traditional cover letter is still very much a vital part of most job applications. Including these 10 elements will help yours shine and put you one step ahead of other candidates.

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