

Checklist for effective resumes and cover letters



Is your resume and cover letter:

- Free of typos, spelling and grammatical errors?
- Organized and prioritized to demonstrate the skills employers need?
- Full of appropriate action verbs and work specific nouns?
- Easy for an employer to visually and electronically scan (no major underlining, no italics, no odd symbols)?
- Does it follow a professional business format with the specific qualifications of the job?

Do they:

- Focus on achievements, particularly on those directly related to job-specific skills and qualifications?
- Emphasize your education, internships, relevant work experience, course projects, community service, leadership activities, professional affiliations, certifications and/or technical skills?

Does your resume:

- Have any personal pronouns or “I” statements? (i.e. “I assisted...”, “I developed”) If so, **remove them.**
- Make you proud to show your resume to everyone?

Does your cover letter:

- Demonstrate your company research to ensure an appropriate match of skills to their needs?
- Provide appropriate contact information for you to the employer?
- Thank the employer for their time and consideration and end on an enthusiastic tone?

Cover letters

A cover letter is a marketing piece that introduces you to an employer. It highlights your specific accomplishments that most benefit the employer. In that sense, a good cover letter “sells” you and your resume.

Before you start writing, ask yourself...

- Who is my audience?
- What skills does the employer want and what do I have to offer?

Introduction/purpose:

- State the job you are applying for, where you found the posting, why you are a strong candidate for the position, and why you want to work for that organization.
- Here, identify the problem - you want to do this up front. Communicate that you understand the problem the hiring manager and his/her industry have. Far too many people begin their cover letters by talking about themselves. Remember, it's not about you.

Why you:

- Write about your experience and qualifications using examples that relate directly to the job posting and how these benefit the employer. You can use education, class projects, work experience or volunteering.
- In this section, connect your background to the job. Explain to the hiring manager three ways in which your background and experience mesh with what they're seeking. If, for example you have a background in the same or similar industry, highlight that. You will want to limit your examples to three, because any more than that becomes unwieldy. Try to make each example unique and diverse!

Closing:

- End your letter with a call to action. There is no point in writing a cover letter if you're not going to ask for something! You want the employer to contact you to learn more about you, so ask for it. “Please contact me so that we may arrange a personal interview,” is a good way to phrase it.
- Thank the employer for reviewing your application and state the best phone number and email to reach you.

Your street address
City, State Zip code

Date

Hiring Manager's Name
Transportation Resources Corporation
1234 North 1st Street Tempe, AZ 85016

Dear _____:

I am applying for the Customer Service Representative position with The Home Depot. I have reviewed the posting for this job online and am very excited about the prospects of this position. My education and experience make me a well-qualified candidate. I am currently a part-time student at Mesa Community College (MCC) in Mesa, Arizona. In addition to my course work, I also work as a part-time Sales Associate at Crate and Barrel, where I am developing customer service and communication skills. As a Sales Associate, I regularly communicate with customers over the phone as well as in-person to understand their needs and recommend the best product for them.

Prior to my role at Crate and Barrel, I was a Lead Barista at Starbucks Coffee Company for three years. This experience helped me build the leadership skills that I have carried with me in my personal and professional experiences following Starbucks. In this position, I was given the opportunity to assist in the development of updated training procedures that were implemented at seven Starbucks stores in our surrounding area. Following this, I was heavily involved in the onboarding and training of new staff members to ensure they were being set up for a successful career with Starbucks.

Thank you for taking the time to review my application. I look forward to hopefully meeting with you in the future to discuss your position and my qualifications. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 480-123-4567 or email me at myname@email.com.

Sincerely,

(Sign here)

Your Name

ASU Career and Professional
Development Services
Arizona State University