Cover Letter Tips

DID YOU KNOW THAT...
whenever you send a résumé to an employer you should **ALWAYS** include a cover letter? If you didn't know, you are one of the vast majority of people. Unfortunately, many of the résumé rules of the road are not common knowledge because there really aren't many places or situations where people can learn them. It has been said that 76% of potential candidates are eliminated based solely on the quality of their cover letter.

Here is a useful template for writing a cover letter that takes all of the guess-work out of the format:

Date Sent

Name of Interviewer
Company Name
Address of Interviewer
Town, State and ZIP

RE: Title of Position

Salutation Choices:
Dear Ms./Mr. (last name):   ← *This is by far the most preferred, if you can obtain this informa-*
Dear Sir or Madam: *tion. It is the most personal and helps make an initial connection*
To Whom It May Concern: *between you and the person doing the hiring.*

Body of Letter. In the *first paragraph*, identify the purpose of your letter, what job you are applying for, and perhaps how you learned of the opening. A general statement showing why you are interested would also be appropriate.

In the **second paragraph**, outline your basic qualifications for the position as stated in the job ad or the job description. This can be several sentences with key words and phrases, skills, education or training, and relevant experience. You may also use bulleted statements to list your qualifications. Some letters even use a two-column style to show qualifications requested and qualifications provided. For example:

- Experience with Windows computers
- Four years experience using MS Word, Filemaker Pro and Excel on a Windows PC.

You may include a **third** *paragraph* if you wish to present accomplishments, successes or other strong qualifications. However, some employers prefer a brief cover letter, so keep it clear, strong and to the point with no unnecessary words or phrases.

A **final short** *paragraph* should state what you would like to have happen next; usually, an opportunity for an interview to present your skills in person and a way that you can be contacted.

The *closing* should be simple and standard such as:

Very sincerely,

             ←*Your signature here*

Your name typed