

How to Write Cover Letters and Interview

Cover Letters

- Start by rereading the ad you are responding to
- Write each employer a personal letter explaining how you can help them
- Inject a little humor in your closing sentence, show that you are human
- Get your letter and resume in early ahead of the others, read sooner
- Double check for spelling errors and typos
- Use standard business format
- Mention what job you are applying for plus where you saw the ad
- Mention all of the requirements in the ad
- If you don't have a skill, substitute what you do have
- Mention a skill that you have that you could bring to the job

Follow Up

- Follow up all letters with a phone call
- Plan what you say to the managers
- If you get nervous, stop take a breath and tell them you are nervous
- The more calls you make the more confident you will feel
- Practice on companies you are not really interested in
- Call before 10AM, if not available ask when a better time would be to call
- The call: call the manager introduce yourself, say something friendly, get down to business, prepare for the unexpected, ask for the interview, prepare for the put off, sell yourself but don't be pushy or beg, wrap it up and confirm the date

Interviewing

- First impressions are important – appearance, manners, and attitude
- The manager is looking for someone who can do the job, work, and get along with co-workers
- Preparing for the interview: role play with a friend
- Selling yourself: be prepared for the question: tell me about yourself...
- talk about your accomplishments, skills, and abilities
- Participate in the conversation, use stories to say what you mean
- Look the manager in the eye, smile
- Add some humor when you can
- Show what you can do for the company
- Turn your weaknesses into your positive aspects
- Deliver a closing statement
- Then ask for the job

Appearance:

- Fresh
- Clean
- Proud
- Dress for the job

- Wear conservative colors
- Avoid excessive jewelry and strong perfumes

Manners:

- Punctuality – be on time
- check in with receptionist
- be pleasant and courteous
- stand up and smile
- give the manager a firm handshake
- sit down when you are invited to distract yourself if manager's phone rings
 - look at resume stand up if someone enters your interview
- always accept a beverage if offered
- don't smoke even if you are invited to join in
- don't chew gum
- sit up straight in the chair
- don't tap your pen or move much
- don't drop the names of important people you know
- don't argue about anything
- don't carry your coat into the interview – leave it with the receptionist

Attitude:

- You need to be enthusiastic, motivated, really excited about coming to work,
- Someone who looks bright, alert, alive, someone who will look managers straight in the eye, honest wide open smile, sits on the edge of the chair.
- Be someone who uses their hands to show what they mean, who asks questions, who is interested in what the company does, who wants to help the company as much as the company helps them, and who is not afraid to say they really want the job.

After the Interview

- Write a thank you note – keep it brief, thank the manager for meeting with you.
- Say that you would like to call in a week, write it the minute you come home from the interview.
- If you decide you do not want the job, write the manager a note...it is professional
- To impress the manager, write an idea note a week after the thank you note but before the follow up phone call
- Call the manager, it tells him/her that you want the job very bad. It shows that you are not lazy or shy, you are persistent, the kind of person who gets things done.
- When asked for a follow up interview – go into more detailed descriptions of your skills.
- It is a focus interview – ask them the agenda of the interview so you can prepare for questions.