



Cover Letter for a Career Changer

Even if a cover letter is not explicitly required by an employer, it is vital and should always be a part of your job applications. A cover letter introduces you, demonstrates you have invested time and energy into researching the organization, highlights a few of your experiences or skills, and requests an opportunity to meet personally with the potential employer. It refers to your resume without repeating the exact same information.

Cover letters for career changers are essentially the same as writing any other cover letter. A career changer's cover letter should still demonstrate that the applicant has researched the company, meets the qualifications of the job and aligns with the organization. The biggest difference between a career changer's cover letter and any other resume is the main body of the letter because the body is the place where the applicant sells their qualifications.

There is no one way to write a cover letter, but if you are a career changer there are some key things you should consider:

- 1) How will you address the elephant in the room?** A recruiter will notice that you are changing careers, so you should address it. You can do this explicitly or more subtly.
 - Explicitly: "While my experience is predominantly in the IT space, I believe my ability to analyze problems and strategically identify solutions will translate well into your Operations Manager position."
 - Subtly: "My career in IT has given me the ability to analyze problems and strategically identify solutions. I believe this has prepared me well for your Operations Manager role."
- 2) Do you meet the minimum qualifications?** If the answer is yes, be sure you use the same keywords from the job description to inform them of this fact. If the answer is no, ask yourself whether your other experience could make up for it in the hiring team's eyes; then spell this out for them in the cover letter.
- 3) Your transferable skills should be on display.** Your resume is the appropriate place to provide many of these transferable skills, but the cover letter is a chance to explain them more in-depth.
- 4) Make sure that you do not simply restate what's on your resume.** Instead, draw conclusions from what your resume shows and point out areas of unique "fit". The cover letter should bring up relevant, employment related issues that cannot be easily expressed on the resume.
- 5) Your cover letter should be results-oriented.** Just like resume writing, cover letter writing is marketing. You are marketing yourself to the organization, so be sure to sell your *achievements* and not just tell them your *responsibilities*.
- 6) How can I best convey this information?** For some it will be the traditional paragraph



format, others it will be in bullet-points or a combination of both. Paragraphs often tell a story whereas bullet points highlight key accomplishments or skills.

7) Tailor your cover letter for every organization. Your key points may be relatively unchanged, but do enough research that you can say something specific and unique in each letter.

8) Use assertive language. This demonstrates confidence and an ability to take initiative. However, be careful! There is a fine line between confident and cocky.

(Sample Career Change Cover Letter)

Jan. 10, 2015

Lance Jones
Corporate Recruiter
First Rate Companies
1 Walnut St.
Philadelphia, PA 12345

Dear Lance:

I am writing to you to inquire about your Associate Human Resources Generalist position. After speaking with my friend Randy Danielson, First Rate Companies' Director of Business Development, I became very impressed with your organization's dedication to excellence and found your acquisition of Russell-Forest Group to be representative of this pursuit.

I have been working in sales for almost five years, and I am now looking to transition into corporate human resources at a company such as yours. Although successful in my sales career, I have realized the aspects of my work I find most rewarding are all in HR-related functions. The following offers a few highlights of my qualifications:

Solid foundation in HR affairs: As senior account executive, I have been responsible for a number of HR functions, including recruiting, interviewing, hiring and training new employees. A quick learner of complex concepts and legal issues, I am eager to broaden these competencies.

Dynamic communication style: I am adept in building relationships, consensus and a shared sense of purpose. I am known for my ability to quickly establish trust with employees, mediate disputes and motivate others into action.

Experience in corporate training: A constant throughout my sales career has been my passion for the design and delivery of staff development programs. Comfortable and experienced giving both large and small-group presentations, I have conducted hundreds of training seminars for diverse audiences across all organizational levels.

I hope you will consider my enclosed resume in application for your Associate HR Generalist position. I am confident I have what it takes to be an outstanding contributor in your organization and welcome your call to discuss this opportunity further. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jill Johnson