How To Write an Application Letter

An application letter, also known as a "cover letter," is sent with your resume during the job application process. A letter adds more personality to your application by providing more details about your background and interest in the position, while a resume outlines your professional skills and experience more. In this article, we explain how to write an effective and engaging job application letter.

What is a job application letter?

An application letter is a standalone document you submit to a potential employer to express your interest in an open position. The job application letter explains who you are as a professional and an individual. The letter should highlight your achievements and skills, helping to get the attention of the hiring manager or recruiter responsible for reviewing applications. When written well, this letter explains to the reader why they should ask you in for an interview and highlights the key qualifications that make you a fit for the role.

A job application letter can impress a potential employer and set you apart from other applicants. In your letter, you may also want to show your familiarity with the company to which you're applying. You can talk about how your professional goals and aspirations align with the company's goals. It's important to use your job application letter to showcase aspects of your personality.

Job application letter tips

When preparing a job application letter, follow these tips to make sure your letter includes the information a hiring manager needs:

1. Emphasize your skills and abilities

An application letter is your opportunity to sell yourself as an excellent candidate for the open position. Include specific examples of situations in which you applied your experience, abilities and skills to benefit the organization. It is also helpful to include data that supports your claims.

2. Stay concise

Although it may be tempting to include a lot of detailed information about yourself, it is important to be concise. If a hiring manager receives a letter that is multiple pages, they may not take the time to read it. A brief letter is more manageable and appealing.

3. Proofread the letter

Since this letter is serving as your first impression, you want to make sure It is as positive as possible. Make sure your letter does not have any grammatical or spelling errors to avoid a potentially negative first impression.

4. Review the job listing keywords

Most job postings will include certain skills and abilities that the hiring manager and supervisor want applicants to possess. Including these keywords in your application letter helps to show the person reviewing it you would be a good fit in that specific role.

5. Send a letter for every position to which you apply

Unless a job posting specifically states not to send an application letter, it is smart to send one for each job to which you apply. This letter offers the opportunity for a potential employer to learn more about you and gives you the chance to set yourself apart from other applicants.

How to format an application letter

When writing an application letter for a job, follow these steps to make sure you include information about yourself and your professional experience that will appeal to a hiring manager:

1. Use a professional format.
2. Create the heading.
3. Address the letter to the hiring manager.

1. Use a professional format

A job application letter should be more professional than a thank-you card or an email to a coworker or friend. The alignment of the document should include single spacing, one-inch margins and left alignment. It's best to use a professional and traditional font, such as Times New Roman, in a size from 10 to 12 points. Try to keep your job application letter to one page. When a hiring manager reviews your job application letter, they will get their first impression of you as a potential employee, so take time to format it professionally and keep it concise.

2. Create the heading

Use a formal business heading for your job application letter. The heading should include your name and contact information, the date and the company name and address. If you send your job application letter via email, you can eliminate your name and contact information from the header and put it at the bottom of the email after the signature instead.

Example header:

Your name
Your city and ZIP code
Your phone number
Your email address

Date

Name of hiring manager or supervisor
Title of hiring manager or supervisor
Company name
Company physical address

By including a professional and detailed heading, you can make it easier for the hiring manager to follow up with you regarding the position.

3. Address the letter to the hiring manager

In your research, try to find the name of the person reviewing applications for the job. Address your letter to this person with a common business greeting, such as "Dear Mr./Ms." and their last name. If you're unable to find their preferred gender pronouns (she/her, them/they) of the individual reviewing your application, you can use "Dear [first and last name]" or "Dear Hiring Manager."

How to write an application letter

1. Review information about the company and position
2. Open the letter by describing your interest
3. Outline your experience and qualifications
4. Include aspects of your personality
5. Express appreciation
6. Close the letter

1. Review information about the company and position

It's best to write a new application letter for each position you're applying for so you can include pertinent details and show your interest in the particular open role. Spend some time reviewing the company information, which you can likely find on the website, as well as the position listing. Compare your qualifications and experience with the list of skills in that posting. You may also want to think about specific experiences that have prepared you for the role, such as leading a team or managing a major event.

2. Open the letter by describing your interest

In the first paragraph of your letter, mention the job title for which you're applying and where you saw the position posting. Include your specific interest in the role and company so the reader knows this is not a generic application letter. Briefly state the main experience or qualification you have that makes you a good fit. This is the section that will draw in the hiring manager as the reader of your application letter, so it is important to appeal to that person quickly and succinctly.

Example: *"I saw the posting for the marketing intern role on my university's online job board, and I am very interested. I'm drawn to your company's mission of innovation and putting the customer first. I am in my final year of earning my*

bachelor's degree in marketing with a minor in communications, so I feel my educational experience has prepared me to work in a fast-paced marketing department like the one within your organization."

3. Outline your experience and qualifications

The next few paragraphs of your letter should highlight your experience, qualifications and skills, positioned in a way that aligns with the company's goals and mission. For example, if you are applying for a job with a nonprofit organization that provides educational opportunities to underserved community members, you could talk about your experience with nonprofit organizations or educational offerings. Since a job application letter should stand on its own without a resume, it's helpful to include details about your experience that relate to the position to which you're applying.

4. Include aspects of your personality

As you're writing your job application letter, consider how you can incorporate aspects of your personality while remaining professional. A friendly and engaging letter is likely to appeal to the reader, especially when they can get an idea of how well you might fit with the team.

For example, in the situation mentioned above, explain in your letter you are good at connecting with children or how you value community spirit.

5. Express appreciation

Before you sign off on your letter, express your appreciation to the hiring manager for reviewing your letter and considering you for the position. The hiring manager is taking time out of their day to read what you have written, so expressing your gratitude for that time spent is a polite and professional way to close the document.

Example: *"I appreciate the time you have taken to review my application letter. Since you likely received a number of applications and letters for this open position, I am extremely grateful for the time you have spent reading about me and what would make me a good fit for this role."*

6. Close the letter

Many people use "Sincerely" or "Best" to close the letter, although any professional sign-off is fine to include. The final line of the letter should be your full name. If you submit a hard copy of the letter, include your signature above your typed name. When submitting an application letter via email, you should include your contact information beneath your name, rather than including it in the header.

Sending a job application letter

The format of your job application letter will depend on how you are sending it to the hiring manager or supervisor. If you plan to email the application letter, the formatting

will differ from a printed, mailed letter. Your contact information should be at the bottom of an email, beneath your typed full name.

When emailing a job application letter, it is also important to consider what subject line to use to make sure the hiring manager opens the email and reads your letter. When scanning their inbox, the hiring manager will see the subject line you included first, along with your name and email address. The decision to read or delete an email ultimately depends on what subject line you choose, which means it is your chance to make a first impression.

The best subject lines are professional, polite, relevant and concise. When sending a job application email, it is important to include the title of the job into which you are inquiring or for which you are applying. Making your subject line specific also helps the reader categorize the email properly and respond accordingly. Review your subject line to make sure it is free of any errors.